



The “Chemical Triangle” of the Region of Lugansk during the occupation: hostages, tortures and extrajudicial executions

**Report on visit of the monitoring group
of the Centre for Civil Liberties to Severodonetsk,
Lysychansk and Rubizhne during December 6–11, 2014**

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Introduction

During a week, a group of supervisors of the Centre for Civil Liberties in cooperation with the Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union made a monitoring visit to the northern areas of the region of Lugansk liberated by the Ukrainian army. The supervisors have visited the cities of Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, and Rubizhne.

The Monitoring Group of the Centre for Civil Liberties consisted of the following experts: Oleksandra Romantsova, the Centre for Civil Liberties, Mariia Tomak, the Centre for Civil Liberties, Mariia Lysenko, a lawyer, Oleksii Bida, a human rights and social activist. Vladyslav Lytkevych, a representative of the International Partnership for Human Rights, also contributed to the mission. Besides, Mariia Lysenko and Oleksii Bida made an additional visit to the same region during December 22–26, 2014.

The purpose of the visit was to study human rights violations situation during April–July 2014, which roughly corresponds to the period of occupation of the region by illegal military groups (IMG). The monitoring objects were the fundamental rights such as the right to life and the right to freedom from torture, guaranteed by international and national law. The group investigated the cases of kidnapping, holding hostage, tortures and extrajudicial executions.

During their visit, the supervisors communicated with the victims and witnesses of human rights violations, their relatives, local human rights activists and journalists, as well as newly appointed representatives of local authorities and the police. The purpose of this communication was to create a generalized idea of the extent, nature, causes and consequences of the occupation of the region by the IMG in terms of human rights violations. In addition, the supervisors set out to learn about the progress of the investigation of such cases by local law enforcement agencies. The researchers also tried to visit the places of holding hostages, but in most cases it was impossible on the grounds that the law enforcement agencies are currently investigating these areas.

This report presents the preliminary results of the monitoring visit. It consists of three main sections, devoted respectively to Severodonetsk, Lysychansk and Rubizhne and specific evidence which the supervisors managed to collect. However, we should note that the report can't be regarded as an exhaustive one. The supervisors are going forward to broaden and deepen it. In the opinion of the participants of the mission, additional visits are required to make a more complete picture of the listed human rights violations in the region over the period of occupation, and special attention should be given to public control over the investigation of individual cases.

Allegedly, the State Security Service of Ukraine is currently investigating about 700 proceedings related to separatism in the region of Lugansk. Officially, over 650 criminal proceedings related to separatism and terrorism were initiated in the region of Lugansk as of December 17, 2014 according to the press service of the Prosecutor's Office of the region of Lugansk. "The Prosecutor's Office of the region of Lugansk has initiated more than 650 criminal proceedings against the members of illegal military groups based on the facts of crime associated with infringement of territorial integrity and inviolability of the state; take-over of public buildings; imprisonment of the residents of the region; illegal possession and use of firearms, ammunition, explosive agents and devices; terrorist attacks and terrorism financing. 71 criminal proceedings on the facts of creation or participation in illegal military formations were referred to court with indictments."

After considering the results of the monitoring visit, the Centre for Civil Liberties sent a number of requests to investigate the crimes committed during the occupation of Severodonetsk, Lysychansk and Rubizhne to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the State Security Service of Ukraine. We are currently awaiting response.

Separately, we appealed to the Ministry of Internal Affairs with a request to publish the official results on the following proceedings: Anton Gerashchenko, a Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, said in August that the Ministry of Internal Affairs will conduct an investigation to determine “whether the owner of Lysychansk glass factory gave its premises to establish there a base for “Prizrak” (“the Ghost”) terrorist battalion voluntarily or they took it by force”. The results of this investigation haven’t been unveiled yet. We ask to publish the results of this investigation, since it deals with one of the key bases for holding hostages.

The group members also faced the reluctance of victims to come in contact. For a variety of reasons people are still intimidated: some of them do not preclude return of illegal military groups to their cities, some fear reprisals from those who both in the period of occupation and now worked and continue to work in local authorities; the victims don’t trust a priori neither local government, nor law enforcement authorities or representatives of the state in general.

It should be noted that the region under research called the “Chemical Triangle” (Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Rubizhne) is quite different, even in comparison with neighbouring areas also released from occupation. Severodonetsk gained notoriety as a “stronghold of controlled separatism” as early as in 2004 when during the Orange Revolution the “all-Ukrainian congress of all levels deputies” took place there. The peculiarity of this region and its difference, for example, from Sloviansk being the most widely promoted in mass media as a centre of kidnapping and holding hostages in Donbas, is that considerable industrial powers focused there in the Soviet period have become almost extinct in recent decades. However, today they allow their owners (who timely used non-transparent post-Soviet privatization options) to play a significant role both in the region and in the country. On the one hand, these facilities were sometimes used in the hostages’ holding scheme. On the other hand, the economic structure established on the ruins of this industrial region (and its consequences such as a total destruction of infrastructure, high level of unemployment and considerable social depression) contributed to the militants success and the feasibility of a scenario of destabilization the region. Severodonetsk, Lysychansk and Rubizhne form, in fact, the agglomeration of industrial cities located at a small distance from each other, with connected infrastructure and economy. However, during the occupation each of these cities, as it turned out, had its own special role assigned to them by the militants and those who led them. There was established a sort of hostages’ “circulation” between these cities. Some of them were sent to Lugansk. People were often threatened they would be given “to Sloviansk to dig trenches”, which clearly evidences that a constant contact with militants of Hirkin-Strelkov was maintained.

Another peculiarity of that region was also chaotic nature of the IMG even compared to the region of Donetsk: there was no one leader there (like Hirkin/Strelkov in the DNR); when someone was kidnapped, it was difficult to locate the person, so family members of trapped persons came through all known IMG’s bases to search out some information, but even those very extensive searches were not always successful; infightings between various groups were more likely to occur there.

Perhaps, this is one more reason why we can find far fewer information on the hostages in the region of Lugansk than in the neighbouring region of Donetsk. So many people believe that the hostages were not taken at all there, although it was far otherwise. In the absence of accurate data, it is difficult to say it for sure, but at least in the triangle of Lysychansk – Rubizhne – Severodonetsk the scale of kidnappings was if not at the level of Sloviansk and Donetsk then little less. As well as in the above-mentioned cities of the region of Donetsk there were three main categories of hostages: “political”, “disciplinary” and people who were kidnapped with an aim of getting ransom or squeezing them out of certain markets (e.g. drug traffic market). Systematic capture of people goes back into a period of preparation for the presidential election. At that time, they began to steal the participants of the election process, such as chief officials and members of district election commissions and precinct election commissions. After that there were entrepreneurs, activists, journalists, government and law enforcement officials, members of city councils, their relatives, as well as people whose behaviour was considered “wrong” by the militants or those who interfered with the militants.

They applied a wide range of tortures to the hostages (from beating and applying electric shockers and noise grenades to psychological burden in form of digging graves “for themselves”, imitation of executions, capturing their relatives), practiced forced labour, and they also forced hostages to fight for the LNR. In fact, the same set of tortures and ill-treatment methods was used in the neighbouring DNR.

The system of places used for illegal retention of people first of all included the buildings of law enforcement agencies, prosecutor’s offices, the State Security Service of Ukraine (SSSU), office buildings, former premises of military registration and enlistment offices, enterprises, even a research institute (the State Institute of Nitric Industry (SINI) in Severodonetsk) and a school. Typically, each location had its “owners” and was famous for cruel or relatively loyal torture chambers. In addition, there were the locations outside the cities, in the suburbs, without IMG bases, where the hostages were brought to victimize. Our monitoring mission became aware of some of them, but we assume that in fact the number of such cases was much more.

Various IMG in that region competed with each other (and as we know, the situation in the occupied territories is so until now), however it was nothing but a redistribution of spheres of influence and material flows at the local level. Strategically it is hard not to notice that all of them performed, so to speak, a common task.

Particular attention should be paid to **the role of police in the system of abduction and torturing**. Unfortunately, there is enough evidence of police officers involvement in abduction and torturing of people in Donbas. And the “chemical triangle” is no exception. In addition, unfortunately, many people have doubts about integrity of existing law enforcement authorities, considering reshuffling after the liberation from occupation to be insufficient.

One of our interlocutors, a victim of kidnapping, a resident of Lysychansk Antonida Melnykova tells the following story: “... *On the way I learned that militants arranged their people at the filling stations to control the staff, who were allowed to service only the vehicles of “their” people. When at the filling station the people sitting in our car in the back seat got out of the cabin, I saw a policeman among them. He came to our district election commission earlier. He was dressed in camouflage with St. George ribbon. Meanwhile at the filling station there were two more policemen, but in uniform. They came, greeted each other and patted each other’s shoulders. I knew the name of the mentioned policeman in camouflage and I told his name to the investigator when I was giving evidence after the liberation of the city, but a few days back I saw the same policeman in the city in a police uniform and with a gun. I do not know, maybe he is already released, but now I’m afraid to talk about it. I’m still afraid of being shot...*”

Although some staff changes in the police have been made. In particular, about 100 of 408 police officers (the whole staff) of Lysychansk City Department were released, 5 of them were dismissed for defamation because they had mounted guard at DNR checkpoints. Our source in the law enforcement office reported that the database of “separatist policemen” in the region of Lugansk currently includes 800 officers, but the list is not complete.

On the other hand, it is important to remember that not all police officers met militants standing at attention and with St. George ribbons on the lapel. The pro-Ukrainian part of police also was subjected to cruel persecution and entered to the “firing lists” of the LNR; they were kidnapped and held captive just the same. For example, the colleagues of Vitalii Petrenko, the killed police officer from Lysychansk (see details about his case in the “Lysychansk” section), claim that he was killed just because he had not agreed to cooperate with the militants. Those pro-Ukrainian police officers who went from Lugansk because of their views and position have been working as a senior management staff of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) in Severodonetsk, Lysychansk and Rubizhne since the moment of the region liberation. Some of them continue to receive threats in social networks.

Representatives of the state authorities put themselves in danger if they held pro-Ukrainian position. Like everyone else who demonstrated support for Ukrainian state in general (an illustrative example was prosecution of the election process participants: if a person was somehow involved in the elections, it meant that he/she supported Ukrainian statehood). However, on the other hand, the local authorities gave rise to the main drivers of the “Russian spring”, which resulted in total violence. Many interlocutors of the supervisors complained of impunity of some of the “Russian spring” organizers (some of them were even detained, but then released as if because of insufficient evidence against them; the cases of the others were even brought to court, but the court made a decision to release them from custody). Pro-Ukrainian population generally fears that if the situation in the region will get out of control they will be “shot in the back”.

It also should be noted that in each of these cities a leading role in organizing pro-Russian movement and violence was played by the Communist Party of Ukraine.

For example, in the case of Lysychansk, Antonida Melnykova tells the following about her abduction: *“At the executive committee there was the group of people. Oleksandr Viktorovych Vynnyk, a trustee of Petro Symonenko at the election, was among them. His wife Tetiana Vynnyk became a self-proclaimed mayor of Lysychansk later. Mr. Vynnyk repeatedly came to our election committee and threatened us. I am confident that it was him who sent the gunmen to us. On that occasion, I also submitted a statement to the police, but there was no reaction.”* Another person from those surveyed by us told us how Tetiana Vynnyk, a member of the Communist Party, had been elected. *“They just said that those who don’t vote for will be killed.”* On September 16, the Prosecutor’s Office of the region of Lugansk reported on a suspicion of T. Vynnyk in promoting separatism, but she has already left the territories controlled by Ukraine.

Another example: the role of a member of the Communist Party was crucial in negotiating release of the Protestant Church pastor (read his story in the “Lysychansk” section) from captivity in “Mozgovyi’s group”.

Another case: On May 22, there was the first major battle between the IMG and the National Guard between Lysychansk and Rubizhne. As reported by the news agencies citing local residents, during the battle “the representatives of the Communist Party walked along the streets of Lysychansk and called on citizens “to protect the city”.

One of the main organizers of the pro-Russian movements and a coordinator, for example, of the roadblocks construction in Rubizhne was “a deputy of the LNR” Nelia Zadyraka, a head of the local branch of the Communist Party. It was said by all interviewed citizens of Rubizhne without exception. There are enough materials about this person both in mass media and in the public domain. In particular, she has a close friendship with Spyrydon Kilinkarov, a former member of Parliament from the Communist Party, who often came to Rubizhne and in whose country house the “Aidar” volunteer battalion discovered an arsenal of weapons in mid-July. The “Day” newspaper of June 2014 contains the following text about the role of communists: “... The blogger from Lugansk Serhii Ivanov posted a copy of interrogation record of a militant captured on Ukrainian checkpoint in Rubizhne on his Facebook page. It is evident from that document that local officials and functionaries of the Party of Regions and the Communist Party of Ukraine were involved in formation of militants’ gangs; supply them with weapons, control over public buildings seizure and attacks on Ukrainian military checkpoints. The record of interview contains the names of A.V. Khomenko (an acting mayor), N.O. Zadyraka (a member of the Communist Party of Ukraine), S.I. Khortiv (a member of the Party of Regions), Mr. Hrachov and Mr. Kravchenko (the officers of the Severodonetsk Department of the SSSU), Anatolii Busenkov (a former mayor of Rubizhne), the names of business leaders and entrepreneurs. Many residents are outraged by the actions of the Communists, but they do not speak it out because otherwise tomorrow the militants will knock on their doors. The militants also seize people with pro-Ukrainian position occasionally and take them to Lugansk, presumably to the SSSU building. Then again, some people say that local communists lay information against pro-Ukrainian activists as they recorded who attended rallies for the unity of Ukraine, who was on Maidan, and what the people were speaking about long before the hostilities outbreak.” Therefore, we cannot rule out the participation of members of the Communist Party in the kidnapping system.

It is also specific that all of the members of the Communist Party are currently beyond the territories controlled by Ukraine.

One of the key factors within the investigated problem was propaganda. It is unlikely to expand violence of such magnitude without a proper propaganda. People were intimidated by western Ukraine, the National Guard and “Pravyi Sector”, who supposedly were about to come and shoot them. The troops, which then escalated into IMG, began to form in winter just under the pretext of that “threat”. Those who believed in “trains full of Pravyi Sector’s members” went “to defend their city at checkpoints”. And that whipped up hysteria was one of the reasons for finding enemies among the population and capture of Pravyi Sector’s “agents” or people who had visited western Ukraine.

Severodonetsk

A city of regional significance in the region of Lugansk, an actual regional administrative centre from September 2014. Severodonetsk forms agglomeration with Lysychansk, Rubizhne and Kreminna. It is one of the most important industrial cities of Donbas, the centre of chemical industry of Ukraine, one of the centres of the building and instrument-making industries and a great transport hub. Before May 2014 its population numbered 108,500.



CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE CITY IN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

The first cases of pressure on civic activists and attempts of hostage taking in Severodonetsk were recorded before the so-called “referendum” of May 11.

On April 6, 2014, from 15.45 to 18.20 p.m., a meeting initiated by a group of citizens to discuss the political situation in the country and support the referendum was held in Severodonetsk near the City Palace of Culture at Khimikiv Prospect. At 16.00 p.m. a fight between that group and a group of citizens who were preparing for the flash mob (they were going to sing the National Anthem of Ukraine and release yellow and blue balloons) was started. During the fight, 6 citizens were injured and called for medical assistance to the emergency room of the local hospital. This fact is registered in the Unified Register of Prejudicial Inquiries. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9DTxS39fJVA&feature=youtu.be>

In early May, the following message regarding the events in Severodonetsk appeared on the <http://svsever.lg.ua/>:

On May 3, 2014, at 14.00 p.m., unidentified persons broke glass in the window and entered the house of a human rights activist Rymma Bilotserkivska and stole a 20-caliber hunting rifle Saiga, a gas revolver, a computer (a monitor and a system unit), and money.

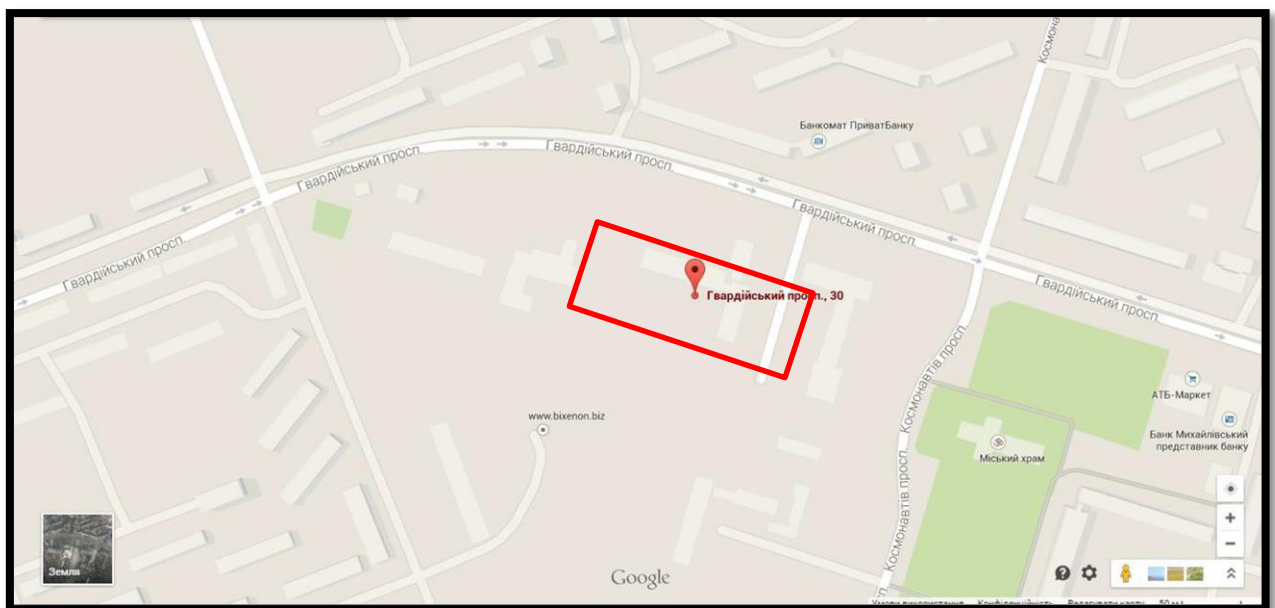
On May 5, 2014, at 3.30 a.m., a building in Severodonetsk where the city representative office of “Batkivshchyna” party was located was thrown with “Molotov cocktails”.

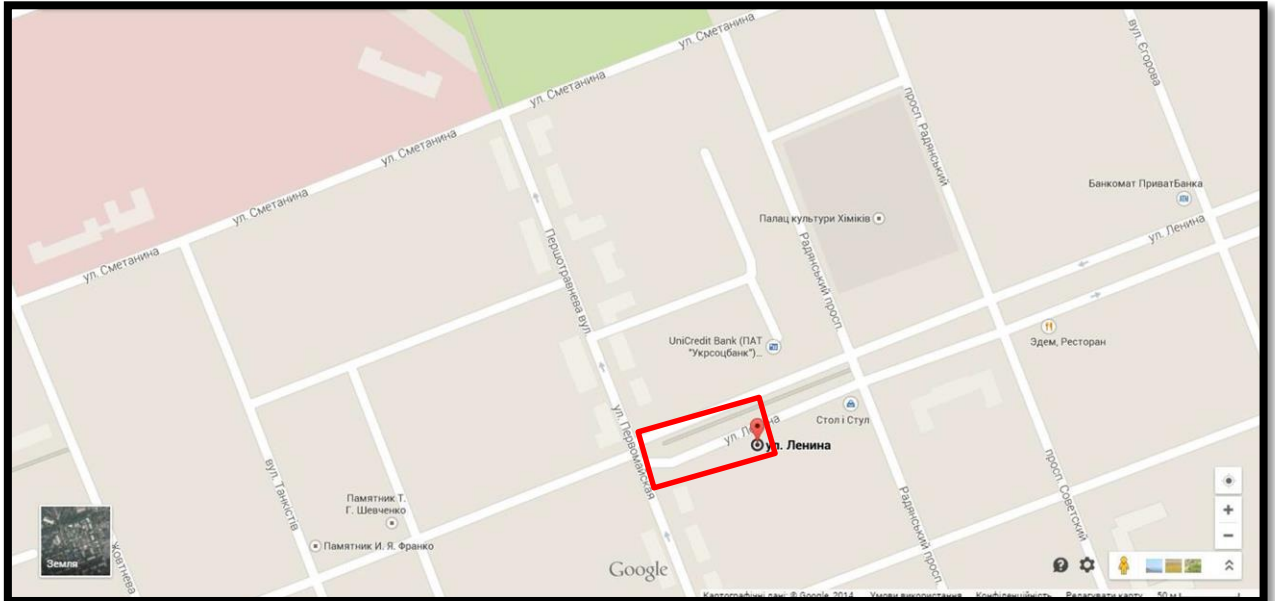
On May 6, 2014, at 17.00 p.m., at the house No.115 in Haharina Street, unidentified persons forcibly huddled into the car ДЖ-2715 a 16-year-old local resident, whose relatives were the members of pro-Ukrainian incentives. Already at 17.10 p.m. the girl was able to jump out of the car near the filling station located at a distance of 700 meters from Budivelnkyiv highway. At 17.40 p.m. the burned car was found near the village Smolianynovo of the Novyi Aidar District.

The general situation with the presence of IMGs, according to the witnesses, was as follows: “In

April–May there were several small armed groups of the “South-East Army”. They used to come to the city in a one car, fire into the air to intimidate residents and go away. Several permanent representatives of the “South-East Army” remained in Severodonetsk campaigning on the “referendum” of May 11. There were two of them: one was a trader at a local market (and was killed later), and the other one was a loader. More than 100 of them came to the city a few days before the “referendum” of May 11”.

On May 5, 2014 several vehicles full of people with small arms entered Severodonetsk. As a result of the invasion the insurgents captured: the City Prosecutor’s Office (30 Hvardiiskyi Prospect, Map No.1), the City Court and the building of the Enforcement Service (19 Lenina Street, Map No.2). The capture passed without any resistance from the employees of the above-mentioned organizations. After capturing the building of the Prosecutor’s Office, the militants began reprisals against the residents who participated in pro-Ukrainian events. Thus, according to witnesses, at about 19.00 p.m. a dozen of people in black uniform with St. George ribbons and guns stormed the office of the company located near “Maister” shop, which is owned by a Euromaidan activist. They shot in the air sitting in cars. In addition, at least one car parked in Donetska Street, in front of “Kontynent” café and near “Maister” shop was shot with automatic firearms. <http://news.severstrasti.com/2014/05/07/53411/>





According to Serhii Samarskyi, a victim, a deputy of the City Council of Severodonetsk:

“In April we started to think together with activists how to protect the city. We met and tried to form self-defence forces. The journalists of STB TV channel came; and in the interview we told them about our plans. Within a week after the story went on the air the guys from the “South-East Army” came and started to persecute those shown on TV, made shots at cars; my family and I were hiding for 3 days. My friend, a businessman, a taxi service and a shopowner, called me and said that they had shot at his office and were seeking him and me too. He managed to leave the city from under the militants’ nose. As far as I know, they threatened all his taxi drivers in order to paralyze the service’s operation”.

The Referendum of May 11 was held.

On May 15, 2014 a concert was held in Severodonetsk near the City Palace of Culture, where the “official” transfer of power to the LNR was declared. A flag of the “Lugansk People’s Republic” was run up on the flagpole near the Palace of Culture. Oleksandr Petrenko, a member of the executive committee and a director of the “Kontinent” enterprise was appointed a new leader representing the LNR in Severodonetsk and Mykhailo Vasylychenko, a deputy of the Severodonetsk City Council and concurrently a head of “Mechanization Administration” Alchevsk utility enterprise was appointed a local “underboss” by the leaders of the “Lugansk People’s Republic”.

<http://inforesist.org/severodoneck-pereshel-pod-kontrol-lnr-bez-soprotivleniya/>

ILLEGAL MILITARY GROUPS AND THEIR LOCATION

On May 25, 2014 the “South-East Army” spread the word on creation of the training and combat Sabotage and intelligence centre in the State Institute of Nitric Industry (SINI) premises (1 Vilesova Street, Map No.1) in mass media. The SINI building was captured on **May 14, 2014** by Lysychansk “Prizrak” battalion of Oleksii Mozgovyi (about 1,000 militants) and “Cossacks’ National Guard” of Mykola Kozitsyn (according to various sources from 300 to 1,700 militants), which included so-called unregistered Cossacks, i.e. those who for whatever reason were not joined to the “Great Don Army” Military Cossack Society or other cossack organizations officially supported by the Russian Federation. All the SINI employees have been placed on indefinite leave, the tenants were forbidden to enter the office building.



The second base of the “South-East Army” (SEA) became **the premises of the city military recruiting office** (4 B. Lishchyna Str., No.1 on the map), which the militants still managed to capture on **June 11, 2014** after the fail on **May 15, 2014**. So-called “military commandant’s office” was located there.

On June 23, 2014 the **premises of the Department for Organized Crime Control (DOCC) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs** (16 and 11 Partyzanska Street, No.2 and No.3 on the map) were captured. These buildings were occupied by representatives of the so-called “Garrison for Severodonetsk protection” – put simply, a group under the command of “a chieftain” Pavlo Dromov, the resident of Stakhanov. He was one who organized the capture of the SSU Administration building in the region of Lugansk. His team consisted of 300–500 Don Cossacks. For some period, Dromov recognized that he executed the orders of the general Kozitsyn, but during the conflict of Kozitsyn and Bolotov he went out of his control.

In addition, the offices of Dromov’s militants were located in the **Severodonetsk SSU Administration building** of the region of Lugansk (No.4 on the map; the approximate date of capture, according to victims, was July 5, 2014) and in **a separate room of the Severodonetsk City Council**, which, according to media reports, on July 4, 2014 was transferred by the mayor of Severodonetsk Valentyn Kazakov to the “South-East Army” to locate its office there. This part of the building is located at 32a Lenina Street in the courtyard of the City Council; the Centre for administrative services, the Civil Registry Office and other services were located there. To transfer this premises Mr. Kazakov referred to the legislation of Ukraine, which allows transmission of premises to the NGOs on a long-term rent basis just for UAH 1.00 per year.

And the last room was a newly built **temporary detention facility (TDF)**. Dromov’s militants tried to grab it on **June 6, 2014**, but a duty attendant refused to give them the keys. The fact was recorded in the Unified Register of Prejudicial Inquiries. However, according to hostages, they were moved to the wards of the TDF on **June 10, 2014**. Thus, we can conclude that the capture was successful as on that date (No.5 on the map).



The evidence of victims indicates that all 3 groups were involved in kidnapping and torturing. They detained and tortured hostages in 4 main areas:

- 1. Basement of the SINI*
- 2. Buildings of the Severodonetsk City Department of the SSU Administration in the region of Lugansk*
- 3. Building of the TDF*
- 4. Building of the DOCC*

In addition, as of **May 15, 2014** IMGs have built 3 checkpoints around Severodonetsk: on the road to Rubizhne, near the bridge from Lysychansk (Novyi Aidar direction), and the most serious one – on the road to Shchedrishchievo. They kept the watch at the first two periodically, while at the last checkpoint there were standing tents, field kitchens and up to 20 people armed with guns were constantly on duty. **Those were the checkpoints that became the places where civil residents were commonly taken as hostages and their transport vehicles were confiscated. In addition, those were the main places of use of forced hostages' labour.**

Moreover, Severodonetsk became “famous” because on **May 26, 2014** there had been lost touch with a group of OSCE observers in the region of Donetsk. 4 members of the organization who were the nationals of Switzerland, Denmark, Estonia and Turkey went missing. On May 29, 2014 it was revealed that the OSCE team was stopped by armed men in Severodonetsk. The group was composed of 4 international observers and a Ukrainian translator, the team went by two cars. On May 30, 2014 the “News of Donbas” TV channel said that Andrii Purhin, one of the terrorist leaders of the so-called “Donetsk Republic” said as follows: “According to the available information two groups of the OSCE detainees are kept in Severodonetsk. This is purely a reflex decision because keeping there the representatives of the mission is a guarantee that military actions won’t be conducted in the city”. The city online edition of Severodonetsk posted information that the members of the special monitoring mission of the OSCE are kept in the building of the SINI. In late May – early June Lugansk and Donetsk militants announced the release of the OSCE observers, but the data was not confirmed by the organization. On **June 27, 2014** a message was posted on the official twitter page of the OSCE according to which 4 representatives of the OSCE Donetsk team were released. On **June 29, 2014** the second Lugansk group of the OSCE observers was released.

However, keeping the OSCE representatives in the building of the SINI have been optional since they were not in the basement and were not limited in visiting WC or in their access to drinking water. It cannot be compared with the horror pro-Ukrainian activists and people who “looked at the militants in a wrong manner”, or “were standing in a wrong place”, had to face.

The supervisors managed to get the APB for persons tortured the hostages captured in the room of the Severodonetsk SSU from the police of Severodonetsk. Their names appear in many of the following statements. Currently, these individuals are wanted.



Пефтєєв Васи́лий Па́влович, 11.07.1965 р.н.,
адреса проживання: Луганська область, м.
Северодонецьк, вул. Федоренко, 4-А, кв. 12.
Активний учасник незаконного збройного
формування.
Розшукується Северодонецьким МВ ГУМВС
України в Луганській області за ст.ст. 260, 263, 341
КК України.



*для об'єкту
або ліній -
спроби*

Барман

Видиш Олексій Сергійович,
25.06.1983 р.н., адреса проживання: Луганська
область, м. Рубіжне, вул. Комінтерну, 59.



Балкунов Дмитро Євгенович, 14.06.1984 р.н.,
адреса проживання: Луганська область, м.
Рубіжне, вул. 30-років Перемоги, 12, кв. 8.
Активний учасник незаконного збройного
формування.
Розшукується Рубіжанським МВ ГУМВС України у
Луганській області за вчинення кримінальних
правопорушень, передбачених ст. 260 КК України.

The supervisors managed to gather the following stories of hostages in Severodonetsk. Some of them are anonymous due to the above-mentioned reasons. And we can briefly summarize all of them just in a one word, which is the key to liberated cities reality: “Fear”.

KIDNAP OF SERHII SAMARSKYI: was captured in May and hold hostage for 5 days

Serhii Samarskyi, a deputy of the City Council of Severodonetsk, a former member of the “Batkivshchyna” party and currently nonpartisan, a founder of the web-site “Severodonetskie strasti” (“Passion of Severodonetsk”), said the main motive for his abduction was involvement in the electoral process.

“As of the May 23 Severodonetsk was staffed with 90% of polling stations, we were ready to hold elections. That is why I was taken as a prisoner,” – he said.

Although according to Serhii his persecution began earlier, immediately after he and his associates began to form self-defence groups in April.

Serhii describes his kidnapping as follows:

“In the night from May 22 to 23 about 6.00 a.m. tommy gunners got to my office. They tied me, beat office equipment and took the system units. At first, I was taken to the headquarters of the Sabotage and intelligence centre in the SINI. There I saw people with guns coming and leaving. They were directed – where to go, whom to shoot, where there would be snipers’ and grenade launchers’ positions. Then I was taken to Lugansk, where I spent two days in the Operational intelligence division; people who kept the watch there left the division and went to shoot our roadblocks regularly”.

They demanded a ransom of 30,000 US dollars for Serhii. The militants were mostly local, from the region of Lugansk: *“Only 5 per cent of them, the rest fought for the idea for money and pillage opportunities”.*

After staying in Severodonetsk Serhii was transported to the SSU of Lugansk, where he, in his own words, was kept in counterintelligence. They threatened to shoot him, but fed and did not beat.

“I was explained that good feedback was given on me from both sides, and that’s why they did not apply force. But then I was put in a shooting range in the basement suddenly. That’s where the nightmare began. They did not allow us to visit WC. Bottles and buckets of excrement were everywhere. The militants tested weapons on those bottles and their contents burst to pieces every which way. We slept on the floor. Several times they tested Russian roulette on me”.

In the Lugansk SSU Serhii had a chance to communicate with a representative of the Congress of Ukrainian Nationalists (*“His whole back was black from the beatings, his kidneys were knocked out”*). He was accompanied by two journalists who were also kidnapped on the election day.

“In order to intimidate us they beat their fellows in our presence, very harshly by the way: with the whole group of 30 persons they came down hard on disciplinary prisoners with rods, antennas and butts of the rifles. It was an “exhibition performance”, and after that the investigator came and said: you see, we’re beating not only your fellows, but our as well...”

At that time, they had already hit Serhii with a butt several times in the stomach and shoulder, and had broken his ear. However, he did not verify battery-induced injuries. Serhii explains it as follows: *“because they almost left me without beating compared to others”*. Serhii thinks that he was lucky: *“I was saved by the fact that they did not guess to switch on the equipment they took from me. There was a bunch of photos from Maidan”*.

According to Serhii, when he was released from captivity in Lugansk, a man who represented himself to be the “commander of the Counterintelligence support department” told him that he had been “ordered” by Mr. Kunchenko who had paid money for it. This is the name of a former member of Parliament from the Party of Regions, a very influential person in the region.

Serhii was released on May 27, 2014. He took his family and temporarily left the occupied territory immediately.

KIDNAP OF AN ACTIVIST: captured in July, was kept imprisoned for 2 days

In early July, an activist and a representative of one of the Ukrainian political parties was detained at the Ukrainian checkpoint in the presence of his wife and children when he tried to take his family to Starobilsk. The man noticed that when he approached to the checkpoint, the militants checked his vehicle registration number with some lists, and then ordered him to stop the car by the side of the road and pointed a hand-held machinegun at him. Before having been arrested, the victim managed to

call to his regional organization and one more party and report on detention. Then his phone was confiscated. The car and car documents just remained in the militants' hands. The militants took the victim's family to his wife's parents.

After a while, an assault team approached on "Lanos" to the checkpoint. One of them, as our source says, looked like a mechanic who had repaired his car.

"They immediately took me somewhere in order to shoot. They showed me a pit, but I did not believe them. They brought me to knees, set a barrel at me, racked the slide and dab the barrel in my head. They beat me with a buttstock in the ribs area".

Later it turned out that two ribs were broken.

The hostage was taken to the Department for Organized Crime Control, where the "Dromov's Cossacks" located. There he spent 2 days, and he was not beaten. Meanwhile the information about his kidnaping reached the publicity. Therefore, according to the victim, he was released the next day in the evening. He was put to a bus and warned not to show his face to the militants.

Later he filed three claims to the police: on illegal detention and imprisonment, on causing grievous bodily harm and on an automobile theft.

KIDNAP OF A BUSINESSMAN FROM SEVERODONETSK: captured in July, released in 23 days

Our interlocutor is a middle-aged man, a successful businessman from Severodonetsk with pro-Ukrainian views. On July 21 in the afternoon several men looking like people with criminal records, whom he had never seen, broke into his office. They brought with them the employees of the businessman, who, in fact, played the role of hostages. One of the militants had a nickname "Barmalei" (see. The APB above). Another was in shorts, bare-chested, with a scar near the collarbone on his back.

They turned all the office upside down. Eventually they found a certificate of acknowledgement for successful entrepreneurship signed by a former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and the Ukrainian flag. *"That was enough for them"*, – said the man.

The militants have made a call and within 5 minutes the reinforcement group came to the place. One of them nicknamed "Bars" was, as it turned out, the chief of counterintelligence. The man was brought from the office at approximately 17.00 p.m. by a Dagestan man named Giurza (aka Zmiia (Snake), aka Polkovnyk (Colonel)). He was put to the car between the two militants and was brought to the TDF. The businessman was not beaten. He suggests the reason could be the order for his theft. A businessman's car with all the documents was taken away and never returned.

In the TDF the man was questioned by "Bars" about his social and political activities, business and property, the attitude to the "Svoboda" political party (the man really had been involved in the "Svoboda" party, but not those generally known, and that established about 10 years ago by the former Prime Minister Yevhen Marchuk). During the first night in captivity, the man was questioned several times. The third time, as he suggests, the interview was conducted by a professional investigator. That evening the man even received a chance to see his wife for 5 minutes. They promised to release him in the morning.

Appearances were all for him, but the next day at 4 a.m., while in the ward, he heard a rumble and a voice command of "Bars" – "Rise! Evacuation complete!" It was, as later confirmed, the beginning of liberation of the city, so the militants were to run. The man heard as the bars in neighbouring cells were opened one by one, and after each crash he heard two shots from AK. It happened with four wards, preceding to his one. In total he heard about 8 shots. The man suggests that they were shooting the other hostages. He did not see their bodies, so he has some doubts. But before there were several people in each of those wards, they were beaten and taken for questioning. Why they did not shoot our interlocutor? He cannot explain it himself. They just opened his ward and said: "Go! To the exit!" When at the exit "Bars" noticed him, he ordered: "Put this one in the car and keep handcuffed". He was in a car with another prisoner Anton, a member of the "Aidar" battalion. There were also, as our interlocutor expressed, 15–17-years old "kids", and the militants let them go home.

Before leaving the man in the car heard "Bars" giving orders to the guard to shoot if anything crops up. The car easily moved to Stakhanov.

“For a half an hour we were brought to the hotel. Then the order “to move” was given again. Then an order to take us to Dromov. We were loaded and brought into the building of the Department for Organized Crime Control to Dromov. His immediate phrase was as follows: “Nothing personal, in a day or two you’d be home; maybe I could exchange you for my Cossacks”.

The man spent 12 days in the Department for Organized Crime Control in a room on the first floor. Handcuffed all the time, he could visit WC during limited hours, and there was the problem with drinking water. They could see the yard, where a garage full of hostages was situated, through the window. He could hear screams and sounds from there that usually accompany beating people. Among others, they held women, people suspected of drug abuse and prostitution. After 12 days the businessman was led to Dromov again, and he ordered to let him wash his face, give some food, and put him in the car.

Thus, on August 2 or 3, the businessman was moved to Perevalsk to the Kozitsyn’s headquarters in the Palace of Culture. He saw about seven people with their hands tied and with packages on their heads on the second floor. There were about 15 people.

“That place was something of a transit settling point. They distributed hostages there and the directions they would be moved. I was brought to the garage, where 14 prisoners of war were sitting. In a few days 3 more civilians were brought”.

On the example of the case of this man, it is clear that civil hostages, in fact, are double hostages. They are not only captured and brutally tortured by the militants, but they also have marginal positions in the Ukrainian lists of exchange or are not recorded in such lists at all.

“My name was not mentioned in any lists, – our source says. – And I was sent to the garage again”.

Thanks to the military men the entrepreneur was able to contact his wife and to give information that the negotiations should be conducted through one of the reverend fathers of the Moscow Patriarchate. Soon he was brought to Kozitsyn again.

“I saw a man in a cassock. Kozitsyn said to him: “Well, is this one yours? Take him away, we found him by accident”.

The businessman spent in Perevalsk about 12 days. In the night from August 13 to 14 he got home. He submitted an application to the police. A mobile phone, a computer server, as well as some other personal items that were stored in the TDF all that time have been returned to him.

KIDNAP OF A CIVIL PERSON: captured in July, held for 7 days

Our interlocutor is engaged in repairing equipment. He has never been a member of any organization, did not participate in rallies or protests, did not contact with the militants or the Ukrainian army. However, “Cossacks’ National Guard” decided that he was a spotter (the man because of his work often had to drive through the roadblocks), took him hostage and held from June 5 to 12, 2014 in the building of the SSU of the region of Lugansk and in the RDF.

“They called themselves counterintelligence. They said they detected spies such as spotters and gunners. They obtained my data. I was taken by 8 people with Kalashnikov machine gun with capacity of 250 rounds, machine guns and pistols. They were dressed in camouflage with stripes of “Cossacks’ Don Troops”. They arrived in two cars, blocked the road (an entrance to the yard) and rang the doorbell. My mother opened them. I did not know them. Later I identified one of them in the MIA catalogue”, – the victim says.

A man with a machine gun identified by the victim was a local car mechanic. The armed men raided the apartment. They took the money lying on the table (5,000 or 6,000 UAH), seized a computer, a phone, bank cards, notebooks. The man was handcuffed, a bag was put on his head, he was loaded in a yellow Volkswagen van and drove to the building of the SSU. The detention was shot on camera. That van belonged to the family of the hostages from Rubizhne, together with whom Vitalii was kept in the building of the SSU.

“The father told me that when during the search of the apartment they found a Ukrainian flag, they cut him with knives and threatened to do the same with my parents, because people going under this flag kill their children. On the argument of parents that it was the flag of the country they lived in, they answered that they live in the Novorossia, but not in Ukraine”.

The parents of a person taken hostage called the police and wrote a statement about their son’s

disappearance. Later Vitalii's father was also kidnapped.

"When in the car, they said: "That's cool, we took a gunner! Yeah, I'll say! We blew his cover..." I wondered why I was so important that so many people arrested me, why they were so happy and capture me, an "important prisoner", on film. There were a lot of threats: "Let me take a bayonet-knife to poke his eye out, he does not require two; let me cut him cut his groin..." etc."

Upon arrival to the SSU, the man was taken to "Chieftain Pasha" (aka "Batia" ("Dad")). He demanded to tell about "beacons", "correcting fire", and our communications agents' positions.

The hostage is sure that it was not Dromov. *"It was a 55–58-year-old man, with a neatly trimmed goatee, swollen face, in a hat. But the chieftain is not dealing with inquiries; the group of militants was responsible for that. They beat so many people every day... got tired, drank tea, went for lunch. The same people – the former policemen"*.

Since the man had nothing to tell about "fire adjustment", the "Dad" ordered to send him to the "special cabinet". After that he was led to another room, put to his knees, and put a helmet on his head.

"They put the soldering iron to my face and threatened to use it unless I start talking. My finger was squeezed to the crunch. Then they start beating: with hands, police batons, wooden and aluminium bats, golf clubs. They beat professionally in vulnerable places – bones, muscles, kidneys and liver. They beat with a stick in my hands, and with batons in my feet. They shoot with traumatic weapon from a distance of 2 meters. They staged a military execution, forced me to dig my own grave. They poured water and threaten that they would strew it with caustic soda."

Then Vitalii was taken to the ward in the basement with a total area of approximately 8 to 5 meters. At that time there were 4 people in that ward. The man recounts them: *"The colonel of the MIA, his colleagues tipped him because he collected data about separatists and their checkpoints. They were offered to exchange him. He was beaten the worst way and also on the head; they stuck a soldering iron into his ear. Now he is alive. The second one was Andrii, a brawler from Rubizhne. He was grabbed at the market where he drunkenly threatened a saleswoman. The saleswoman called separatists and they grabbed him. He was strongly beaten: it looked like they worked off on him. They shot his leg just above the ankle and did not give medical care. The third one was a public bus driver. He was accused that he is a member of Pravyi Sector, although he was also taken drunk, and he was released soon. And the fourth was a man from Rubizhne, a drug dealer. He was taken hostage because militants wanted to wrestle his market away from him. He had a top of the left ear incised; later a local medical assistant sewed it down"*.

During Vitalii's stay in captivity sometimes he was in a cell alone, and sometimes there were up to 15 people. Inmates told him that prisoners usually were beaten on the first day, and then they were sent to involuntary labour. They released only those who were more or less improved in strength – so that there could not be any complaints. If a person was getting really bad, they asked the guard to call for medical care. There were also former drug addicts in the ward, the residents of Rubizhne and Severodonetsk were a significant part of them.

"Most of them were drunkards, mischiefs, drug addicts, dealers or random people – "looked in a wrong manner", "said a wrong word"– the man says. – At the end of the second day they brought to the ward a paramedic of the Armed Forces of Ukraine from Kharkiv. Together with two officers and a driver he got lost and ran to a security road block of separatists. Every night he was taken for beating, we heard him shouting, and then the militants returned him to our common ward... Later a woman came to our ward together with "Barmalei" (one of the militants). A son of that woman was a fighter who died near Lysychansk. She buried her son and came to "pay for his death". Barmalei told three persons (a paramedic was among them) to leave the ward. The woman started screaming at them. I heard sounds of blows and screams. Only two of them returned. We have never seen a paramedic again."

On the fourth day of his captivity in the SSU building the former prosecutor of Rubizhne (see "Rubizhne" section) and then Ye. Chudyk (see "Rubizhne" section) were brought there.

On the fifth day he was transferred to the jail in Partyzanska Street. *"The man called Yura was in my ward (he did a spell in prison, and lived in Severodonetsk). The third person was a "newcomer" from Borivske, he was responsible for collecting money and food for the militants from the population, but*

drank all money away. The militants chased him, shot at him but failed, then caught, beat, and finally thrown in our ward.”

In that jail the man was mercilessly beaten again during interrogation in the presence of newly arrived Lugansk investigators. They even broke the second rubber baton (the first one had been broken in the SSU building). They stopped beating only when his leg began to twitch. But not for a long time. Subsequently beating was resumed. *“They started to beat in my arms, said to take off my pants and threatened to cut off the penis with an axe. And then they began to beat in his my head. After that “Tsyhan” began to choke me with a golf club until rattle. Early in the morning I was brought to the ward again.”*

On the sixth day they brought the father of the victim, whom they held in the so-called “glass” (a ward 1.5 to 2 meters). However, the next day he was released.

The militants’ “fight against drugs” can be illustrative. *“I heard “Tsyhan” and Kolia (the members of the IMG) brought someone in a reception area, which is near the ward I was sitting in. During beating and questioning a man, I realized that he was a drug dealer from Severodonetsk who brought someone a dose of the drug. He was injected a dose of the drug, which was by him during the arrest. Eventually that man was killed to death. In the morning Barmalei yelled at them, that they killed him too early as they could not extract the required information.”*

The hostage was released on the eighth day. They brought him into a room where there were two men, whom he had not seen before; one of them had soldierly appearance.

They returned to the victim the things picked from him during capturing (except money). Then they forced him to write exactly as told and read on camera the following text: *“In the course of my work, I have many contacts with customers and companies throughout Ukraine, which aroused suspicion. I did not serve in the army, I did not adjusted fire, and I have no complaints.”*

The man had a chance to talk to those whom he described as a person with a soldierly appearance.

“During our talk it became clear that he was a former Afghan, who also served in Africa. He told me openly that he was from Russia, a retired member of the Main Intelligence Directorate. “We were thrown for help, because THOSE could not cope.” I asked him about my case, about unjust detention and tortures. He said that the people were given guns and the fighters experienced impunity and permissiveness. “We do not decide, we have been sent to help them” – he told me.”

The man was released on July 12. He met Severodonetsk exemption in the hospital with multiple injuries.

According to him, his case died out in the police. *“In the city police department they offered me to identify those present in the SINI basement, but never those militants present in the building of the SSU. Most fighters from the SSU are now in Stakhanov, Perevalsk, Alchevsk working for Kozitsyn and Dromov.”*

KIDNAP OF OLEKSANDR KONONOV AND VIKTORIIA KONONOVA: were captured in August, held in captivity for more than 3 months

Since 2005 Oleksandr Kononov is a disabled person of group I (traumatic amputation of the right hand and left foot). Until recently Oleksandr and his wife Viktoriia have been hardly interested in socio-political situation in the country (although Oleksandr mentions that he is interested in legal issues and is a member of the “Legal literacy campaign for drivers” Internet community). They began actively monitor the situation in February 2014 after the mass shooting of people on Maidan in Kyiv. On May 15 spouses living in the village Voronovo near Severodonetsk connected home Internet, which allowed them to monitor the events closely. The volunteers’ activities inspired Oleksandr and Viktoriia, so in June they decided to join the army of volunteers and started working underground. At that time active violence started in Severodonetsk: 3 corpses with signs of gunshot wounds were found in the marsh between the village Syrotyne and Lysychansk factory for the production of baking soda (Lyssoda LLC), an office of a local deputy Serhii Samarskyi was destructed, an administrator of the city internet portal Andrii Nidchenko was captured.

“Our family was aware of the fact that at any time they could come and take us too. I did not hide my pro-Ukrainian position. We found more like-minded people, and began to help the military,” – Oleksandr says.

On July 22 in the afternoon, Oleksandr and Viktoriia left Shchastia for the village Vesela Tarasivka. They

lost the way and went to the checkpoint, where there were people without identification marks. They noticed a Ukrainian flag in the car of Oleksandr and Viktoriia, and demanded to get out of the car immediately, put them near the concrete fence, searched, took phones and documents. They were kept at the point of a gun.

“Then a man came – big, tall and chubby, with light hair, with a gun in a holster. He approached us, introduced himself as Serhii, the prisoners of war expert. I replied that we were not military, but civil citizens. He asked where we were going, to whom exactly and why. Also he said that we were not subject to any Convention on the prisoners of war and they could do anything with us.”

Later they have called other people who begun to beat spouses and simulate shooting, to shoot near their ears (in consequence Oleksandr does not hear in one ear well), and due to one of such shoots Oleksandr was slightly injured. They wore a plastic bag on Viktoriia’s head and choked her until she fell unconscious.

“They did it in my eyes. In such a way they wanted me to provide them with necessary information but I had none. They considered us to be the spotters, firing pointers and reconnaissance men. At one moment we were told to say goodbye to each other. They led her to me and said that she would be taken to shoot and “I would not see her any more”. We said goodbye to each other and they got her away.”

Oleksandr remembers the angriest militants.

“There were two characters who were burning with hatred – a man with a nickname “TT”, who led a group for work with prisoners, and his closest aide – I do not know the name, but his nickname was “Chekh”.

After the first scenes of violence, they have never applied physical abuse to Oleksandr. But there was psychological pressure: *“Threats to shoot me, to hang on at the Metalist checkpoint, so that “nazi” could see what would happen to each volunteer.”* The most effective means of pressure on Oleksandr was violence against his wife, and the militants used this method successfully. *“I’ve heard that they used the electric shocker to my wife and heard her screaming. After that I signed a written warrant of cooperation with them, under condition of keeping me and my wife healthy and alive.”*

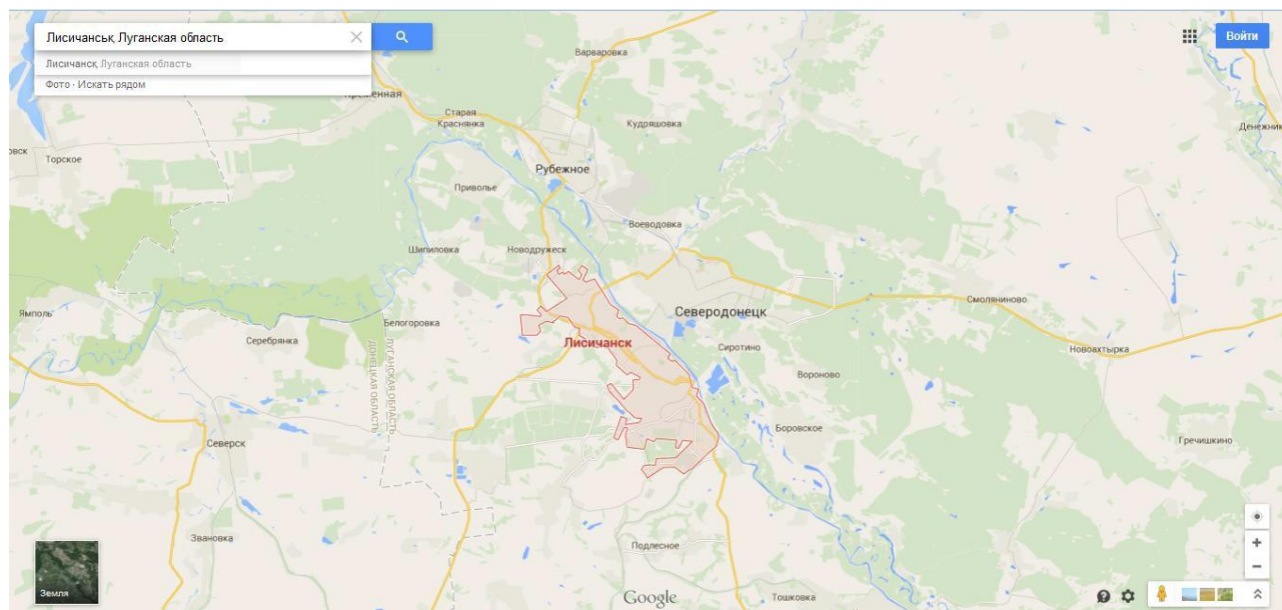
Then Oleksandr was taken to the temporary detention facility of Leninskyi District Police Department of Lugansk, and put to the ward. In three days he learned that his wife was sitting in the next ward. The first month Oleksandr was kept there, another month he spent in the basement of the regional administration.

“I was kept in the boiler room, the floor was covered with wooden boards, cardboards, wooden doors – we slept on them. There was not lighting there during the first week, later they install a lighting system. The room was not ventilated and the temperature was 30 degrees. The conditions were pretty tough, the room was small enough, but it contained a large number of people, from 40 to 60 prisoners in different periods.”

Then the couple was moved to Zhovtnevyi District State Administration, because the commandant moved there. Oleksandr was put in a room 4 to 4 metres. The total number of people kept there was from 15–20 to 39 people in different periods. At that place the couple was kept for more than a month. The process of freeing the couple began when Viktoriia was able to talk to Lugansk Afghans who came to the district state administration to negotiate the exchange of prisoners of war.

On October 28 they came to us and said: “Get out!”

Lysychansk



CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE CITY DURING THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

On April 11, the deputies of the Lysychansk City Council adopted an appeal, in which they stood against splitting Ukraine, disarmament of illegal formations and Russian as a second state language, a non-aligned status of Ukraine, amnesties of all protesters in the south-eastern regions of Ukraine, etc. That list included an item “to condemn seizure of buildings of state and local government by radical nationals.”

On April 16, according to the “Informatsiyni Opir” (Information Resistance) group in Severodonetsk and Lysychansk “the police and coalminers in close collaboration winded down all manifestations of separatism among local fans of Putin quickly. Joint patrols of cities were organized. City entrances were controlled to prevent the “performers” visits.

However, Lysychansk was one of the cities where the so-called Referendum of **May 11** was held.

In the all-Ukrainian information space of already destabilized country this city appeared in May on the eve of the presidential elections in Ukraine which have never happened there (and local elections as well). News agencies reported on seizure the district electoral commission No.110, which became the sixth one captured in this region. <http://www.unian.ua/politics/920374-na-donechchini-zalishayutsya-zablokovanimi-7-okrujkomiv.html> Not only the electoral process, but also the rail connections were blocked there.

On May 22, the representatives of the “Lugansk People’s Republic” terrorist organization blocked the bridge in Lysychansk completely and stopped the traffic in the “Water station” area. Because of blocking the railway bridge on the stretch Nasvetevych – Rubizhne by the militants Donetsk Railway closed the traffic on the stretch Svatove – Lysychansk, cancelled 5 distant and suburban trains and changed the routes of a number of trains. <http://economics.unian.ua/transport/920985-na-luganschini-terroristi-pidirvali-zalznitsyu.html>

The same day the IMG representatives captured a number of mines of Lysychanskvuhillia enterprise. On May 23, the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry reported that the mines named after R. Kapustin and D. Melnykov, as well as “Pryvolnianska” and “Novodruzhivska” mines that are owned by the state coal mining company Lysychanskvuhillia stopped working because of the actions of terrorists. “On May 22, 2014 an armed group of unknown persons captured two operating separate units of

Lysychanskvuhillia OJSC”, – said a statement of the Ministry of Energy and Coal Industry of Ukraine. – The terrorists menacing with guns demand to provide them with explosives. Their actions contain all the features of a serious criminal offense.” Therefore, the Ministry requested assistance of the Security Service of Ukraine. <http://economics.unian.ua/energetics/920716-minenergo-teroristi-zahopili-chotiri-shahti-lisichanskvugillya.html>

On May 22, the first major battle was held between the IMG members and the National Guard (namely the 30th brigade from Novohrad-Volynskiy) in the area between Lysychansk and Rubizhne. An ambush of militants was organized on Tomashivskiy bridge (on the road between Rubizhne and Lysychansk). According to some information, the chairperson of a local department of the Communist Party in Rubizhne Nelia Zadyraka was involved in its organization. As a result, Ukrainian military men and militants were killed.

On June 11, according to the report published on informer.lg.ua, the armed men occupied the building of the repair and maintenance administration, located in the city centre, close to the residential houses. The snipers were located on the roof; the entry was reinforced with barricades. The same day, but earlier, the armed men seized the prosecutor’s office in Lysychansk and “evicted” all the employees from there, allowing them to take personal belongings. About two hundred armed men arrived to the city, presumably from the region of Krasnodar and from Kazakhstan.

On June 12, according to the [InfoResist](http://inforesist.org) publication, “in the course of a conflict the local bandits kicked off the lads from Lugansk. The same day without long negotiations the winners decided to declare the “Lysychansk People’s Republic” and declared war against the central Ukrainian authorities.

On July 12, Lysychansk was among the five points on which targeted airstrikes were made. The Press Service of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine said that “the first airstrike was made on the strongholds of terrorists in the area of Lysychansk. Because of it the groups of militants, weapons and equipment were affected.” <http://army.unian.ua/939048-sili-ato-tochkovimi-aviaudarami-znischilidesyatki-teroristiv-i-kilka-gradiv-minoboroni.html>

On July 14, active hostilities were held in the region. According to the information of the ATO Staff the settlements of Metalist, Oleksandrivsk, Bile, Rozkishne were liberated from the militants and the “Lugansk” airfield was unlocked. In some cities, particularly in Lysychansk, “the militants were going to use the captured premises of the state office buildings as their strongholds; state television and radio were blocked in the central cities, and instead of them they broadcast Russian TV channels that do not provide an objective assessment of the actions of the ATO soldiers during the liberation the cities of Donetsk region from terrorists. The militants continued to intimidate the local population; there were documented cases of looting and theft of personal and commercial vehicles, creating tensions with locals.” <http://army.unian.ua/939316-sili-ato-zvilnili-vid-boyovikiv-dekilka-naselenih-punktiv-luganskoji-oblasti.html>

On July 16, the IMG representatives stopped the work of the State Treasury Department and worked over the ATMs in Lysychansk, the National Security Council said.

On July 19, the press centre of the ATO reported on “military advance in the areas of Lysychansk and Severodonetsk”. <http://www.unian.ua/politics/941513-teroristi-vnochi-obstrilyali-z-minometiv-ta-gradiv-ryad-pozitsiy-ato.html>

On July 17, a sole proprietor from Lysychansk requested to put an airstrike on his enterprise, where the soldiers of the LNR located. The information was written by a citizen of Kyiv Ihor Chalenko, a son-in-law of the businessman, on his Facebook page. “I appeal to the leadership of the ATO. The

private property of my father-in-law (a large vehicle service station with a total area of 700 m²), situated in the city of Lysychansk, the region of Lugansk, is captured by terrorists. The building is used to repair the armour of separatists and in this regard it is of strategic importance. We (or rather, my father-in-law) KINDLY ASK you to apply targeted airstrike at the address 15 Hryzodubovoi Street, Tsehlianyi district,” – Mr. Chalenko wrote.

On July 20, the presidential adviser Yuriy Lutsenko said on TV that the Ukrainian military men changed over to the offensive: “In recent days we split the hostile terrorist group into three parts. The cities Lysychansk and Severodonetsk were cut, as well as the region of Lugansk is cut from the region of Donetsk.” According to him, the military claimed that they surrounded the terrorists and were ready to complete the operation. <http://www.unian.ua/politics/941832-armiya-otochila-terroristiv-i-rozdilila-jih-na-tri-grupi-radnik-prezidenta.html>

In the morning of July 21, the “Informatsiyni sprotyv” (Informational resistance) resource reported on partial blocking of Lysychansk by the ATO forces. It is reported that “terrorists make a breakthrough of the area at night. They destroyed a large amount of militants’ equipment and manpower. About 30 terrorists were captured.” <http://www.unian.ua/politics/941854-sili-ato-vidrizali-osnovni-ugrupovannya-terroristiv-vid-zabezpechennya-timchuk.html>

The Minister of Defence of Ukraine Valeriy Heletey announced on his Facebook page that in the evening on July 20 active military clashes continued in the areas of the cities Lysychansk, Rubizhne and Severodonetsk, during which the militants suffered heavy losses. “In particular, terrorists tried to break through surrounded Lysychansk with a motor convoy in panic, but trapped into “the sack of fire” prepared by the units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. As a result, three units of equipment of terrorists are burning at the site of the battle. The rest of the mercenaries scattered and returned to the blocked city. During the last day the Ukrainian military forces captured 35 Russian mercenaries, the most of whom are from the army of Kadyrov.” <http://www.unian.ua/politics/941859-sili-ato-vzyali-v-polon-35-boyovikiv-geletey.html> Later the press service of the President of Ukraine said that “Chechen nationals are among the captives. All fighters have Russian citizenship.” <http://www.unian.ua/politics/941863-ponad-20-uzyatih-u-polon-pid-lisichanskom-boyovikiv-mayut-rosiyske-gromadyanstvo.html>

On July 21, in the morning, the press service of the ATO informed that the units of the National Guard had liberated Rubizhne and were very close to Lysychansk.

On July 22, in the afternoon, neutralization of IMG and mopping-up operations started in Lysychansk. <http://army.unian.ua/942694-sili-ato-prodovjuyut-zvilnyati-mista-i-naseleni-punkti-vid-terroristichnih-ugrupovan.html>

On July 22, there one of three bridges over Siverskyi Donets located near the railway station was blown up. The sources of the Ministry of Defence in the “Informator” printed edition reported that “Lysychansk is almost empty. Only Chechens sabotage groups are working there. The militants of Mozhgovyi left the city and moved to Alchevsk where they consolidated the defence in the territory of the metallurgical plant. But no one has seen Mozhgovyi in the city yet.”

On July 23, the commander of the “Donbas” battalion Semen Semenchenko reported that an intense battle is conducted for Lysychansk.

In the night from July 23 to 24, the Secretary of the National Security Council Andriy Parubiy wrote in his Twitter that “blue and yellow flags are already hanging on the outskirts of Lysychansk”.

The Secretary of the National Security Council had not reported the details of a raid for liberation from terrorists yet, but noted that most terrorists are Russian saboteurs having put through Chechnya and other hot spots.

On July 24, in the afternoon, the commander of “Donbas” battalion Semen Semenchenko reported on “the on-going assault of Lysychansk. It is better for the residents to remain in bomb shelters. Terrorists attack the city with mortars and automatic grenade launchers”. In addition, Semen Semenchenko notified the organization of a “green corridor”: “Information for those, who just decided to leave the city: one of the local journalists is responsible for organization of a humanitarian corridor for WOMEN AND CHILDREN. Write him a private message and he will coordinate you with the group and place. Please do not walk the streets until the end of hostilities”.

On July 24, in the evening, the spokesman of the Information Centre of the ATO Andrii Lysenko reported during a briefing that “Ukrainian troops entered Lysychansk and occupied its northern regions”. According to him, the terrorists remaining there were blocked, as Ukrainian forces intercepted the retreat for them. He also reported that “in the liberated areas they are checking former habitats of militants, and carrying out the demining works. Operational measures to detect subversive terrorist groups are under way”.

Late in the evening on July 24, the combat of “Donbas” battalion Semen Semenchenko reported on his Facebook page that “Lysychansk was taken. The terrorists (Lysychansk garrison of the “Large Don Army”) escaped from there”. According to Semen Semenchenko, the city was liberated by the soldiers of the “Donbas” battalion and by the 24th unit of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. He also wrote on his page some information about the police activities: “The biggest surprise was waiting for us at the local police office. A bunch of “police officers” (some officers even with weapon) were quietly sitting in the town captured by terrorists. When asked, “Why you did not fight?” they answered, “What could we do against them?” When we asked, “Why you did not leave the city?” we heard only a vague bleating in response,” – Semenchenko says. The National Security Council said **on July 25** that “the Ministry of Internal Affairs will conduct an internal investigation on the police officers who were in Lysychansk during the occupation of the city by the terrorists and did not take any action to counter the separatists”.

On July 24 at 22.20 p.m. Ukrainian armed forces raised the flag over the City Council of Lysychansk. The Lieutenant General, the Chief of the General Staff Viktor Muzhenko reported on it to the President Petro Poroshenko. “The operation for liberation of the city lasted two days and was very difficult. The terrorists offered stubborn resistance. Some of them became panic-stricken and left the city the day before the main assault, joining the other bandits”. “With a well-planned operation of the ATO Staff, the Armed Forces of Ukraine delivered a multiple thrust to the terrorist manpower clutters, checkpoints, and other strongholds and fortified areas of the armed gangs, which ultimately allowed them to liberate Lysychansk from invaders,” – the press service of the ATO informed.

The National Security Council reported: “Fighting for Lysychansk was long because the President of Ukraine ordered not to engage fire with heavy artillery and from air on the settlements – the land forces had to liberate the city street by street using only small arms.”

On July 25, the National Security Council reported that searching for weapons and ammunition remaining in the city, as well as survey and demining residential premises, are under way in Lysychansk; Ukrainian forces also draw the plans for restoration of critical city infrastructure and make necessary calculations.” On the same day, according to the press service of the ATO, Ukrainian military men have demined the bridge between Severodonetsk and Lysychansk.

On July 24, according to the press service of the Prosecutor’s Office of the region of Lugansk, there were initiated criminal proceedings against the Secretary of the Lysychansk City Council on

encroachment on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. “The Prosecutor’s Office of Svatove district of the region of Lugansk provides procedural guidance in the criminal proceedings initiated against the Secretary of the Lysychansk City Council.

The information about the above-mentioned criminal offense is included into the Unified Register of Prejudicial Inquiries according to the Chapter 2, Article 110 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (violation of territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine). Moreover, the Secretary of the Lysychansk City Council appealed to the President of Russia Mr. Putin and the Federal Chancellor of Germany Mrs. Merkel for help in forming the future structure of Donbas.

On July 26, the Ministry of Defence reported that “during the mopping-up operation in Lysychansk the soldiers of highly mobile assault forces of the Armed Forces cleared a sniper group of terrorists.” During the liberation operation the soldiers of the Armed Forces captured the arsenal of weapons and ammunition. In particular, a KamAZ truck loaded with missiles to the anti-aircraft missile system “Strela-10”, as well as a large number of small arms, mortars and guns; and sniper rifles of new model made in Russia. Semen Semenchenko notes that when the soldiers left Lysychansk they saw many policemen in uniform in the streets; a lot of them had “Berkut” chevrons.

On July 27, the press centre of the ATO reported that people began to return to Lysychansk. “In the city centre of Lysychansk, which was released by the Armed Forces of Ukraine on the eve, we restored power supply; grocery stores and pharmacies began working there. Active works on the restoration of gas and water supply to the residents’ houses are under way. Repairs are complicated by the fact that the bandits destroyed key public utilities.”

The 5th TV Channel reported that the terrorists of the so-called “LNR” looted all the shops before leaving Lysychansk, and there is no food in the city. “People who lived in the basements for a week are hungry. So the National Guard gives them their army field rations,” – the statement said.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pAg0n7T5NHw>

In August the pyrotechnic units of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine neutralized 150 kg of trotyl in the territory of the cities of the region of Lugansk liberated from terrorists, including Lysychansk.

On September 16, the Prosecutor’s Office of the region of Lugansk reported its suspicions of promoting separatism to the Secretary of the Lysychansk City Council. According to the regional Prosecutor’s Office, “the Secretary of the City Council convened a special session at which they voted for the so-called state sovereignty act of the “Lugansk People’s Republic”. “Later she publicly expressed the need to change the boundaries of the territory of Ukraine and withheld recognition from the Government of Ukraine in the city of Lysychansk.” In addition, on July 2 the Secretary issued an illegal order, under which all the wealth that was kept in the Lysychansk City Council were transferred to the so-called “military commandant’s office of Lysychansk”.

On September 17, the National Security Council announced that on September 13 the mayor of Lysychansk had been kidnapped, and was held captive by the IMG.

ILLEGAL MILITARY GROUPS AND THEIR LOCATION

A number of armed military groups operated in Lysychansk. They were stationed on the territory of the office buildings and industrial enterprises. According to the evidence of our respondents, the main forces were represented by the following groups: “Prizrak” (Ghost) battalion led by Mozgovyi (Lysychansk glass factory); the group of Caucasians (the building of the Lysychansk District Oil Administration); the “Orthodox Russian Army” (the building of the Prosecutor’s Office); and a number of places used not for the militants bases, but for holding and interrogation of hostages.

It was Lysychansk where the militants of a well-known because of the events in Donbas so-called “gang of Oleksii Mozgovyi” (who appeared there in May) were quartered. The headquarters of his “Prizrak” battalion was in the premises of the **Lysychansk glass factory** (Stiekolnyi District). As a police officer told the members of the mobile group on condition of anonymity: *“when Mozgovyi appeared here – the weapons appeared as well. He gave it. They conducted manoeuvres there allegedly; the weapons had registered numbers. The ads with the following text appeared: “enter the armed groups, do not lie on the sofa, and come to us to protect the city”*.

During the occupation, a rather large area of the plant housed a significant number of military equipment (trucks KamAZ, Ural, Armoured Transport Vehicles), weapons and ammunition, medicines. A training ground for militants was also there; the chiefs of the group were sitting in the former factory office at the entrance to the plant. In addition, the plant became a major place of holding hostages in Lysychansk. Most of our interlocutors were kept exactly in that glass factory while they were taken hostages. They held both political prisoners (hostages for ideological reasons) and disciplinary prisoners there.

For the time being, according to our interlocutors, the militants were mostly local residents. Antonida Melnykova, who was taken hostage at the end of May, says the same. “Local women were coming to me and asking: *“Who you are? You’re not ours, not from our district... Why do they capture you? We do not capture anyone...”* “*Now they will shot you – but it serves you right.*” Another woman brought me a sedative – *Peonies tincture... Another man told me that he was from Zolotarivka (a village near Lysychansk) and that he was unemployed... None of them wore any chevrons at that time, just camouflage and a St. George ribbon.*”

Actually, none of our respondents saw any identification marks at the glass factory.

However, a car mechanic from Rubizhne Volodymyr Koziuberda, who was captured and taken to the premises of the same glass factory a month later, in late June, was inquired by the Russian military men. When asked how did he identify them just as the Russian military men, Volodymyr Koziuberda said: *“Even then, there were 95% of Russians, and no one was ashamed, no one hid. They said that we, the Russians, had come to defend you, but you were sitting here, and did not protect your Donbas from “banderovtsy”, from the members of Pravyi Sector; they would come to you and kill you, they would eat your children and abuse your women. They showed their passports, rubbed our noses in them and said – we were from Rostov region, from Belgorod region. We, the Russians, had arrived there, but you were just sitting and drinking vodka. The fact was that they caught many citizens at night with a bottle of beer, and brought them to the glass factory, every night they captured dozens of them in such a way. Thus, 95% of them were Russians. With modern weapons, with the latest optical rifles. They made raids every night and went out as quietly as came – they tried to be invisible so that no one even noticed them. Those military men wore Russian chevrons. As they drove us to clean toilets, corridors etc., we saw all that”, – Volodymyr said (for more details see “Rubizhne” section).*

This is indirectly confirmed by the materials published in mass media after Lysychansk had been released. After the city liberation at the Lysychansk glass factory they found guidelines for assault and commando units bearing the stamps of the General Staff. The photo of Russian weapons and humanitarian supplies found inside the plant were published in the media. http://www.ukrinform.ua/ukr/news/zalishena_teroristami_baza_v_lisichansku_1960552

The group of Mozgovyi was located not only at the Lysychansk glass factory, but, according to some witnesses, in the **military enlistment office**. They called themselves the “South-East Army”.

One of the groups was based in the **Mining College of Lysychansk**. They called themselves “people’s militia”.

According to our sources in the law enforcement authorities, the group that based in a captured building of the **Security Service of Ukraine** was headed by a man nicknamed “Poltinnik”. According to Nataliia Honcharova, whose husband, Dmytro Skoromokha, was kidnapped (see details below), the local members of the IMG were based in the SSU building. *“They said that there was the greatest chaos – local criminals, drug addicts,”* – the woman says. For example, Nataliia’s neighbour, who served out 4 times, was among them. Now his place of residence is unknown. According to our sources in the City Department, cossacks were also quartered there.

The “Great Don Army” was quartered in the building of the **Prosecutor’s Office**. They had appropriate marks on their cars. They had a flag with the face of Christ. Our interlocutors suggested that they were not local.

Two men with guns were constantly on duty in the **Executive Committee of Lysychansk**. Several times, as Nataliia Honcharova, an employee of the executive committee, suggested, she saw *“kazakhs, people of Asian appearance”* there. These words are confirmed indirectly by the message published on informer.lg.ua, according to which on June 11 *“about two hundred armed men, presumably from Krasnodar region and from Kazakhstan”* came to the city.

There are many evidences in relation to the presence of Caucasians in the occupied Lysychansk. Anatolii Derhach, a fighter of “Chernihiv”, the special battalion of the MIA that liberated the city, told in an interview about “approximately a thousand of Chechens”. Antonida Melnykova said that in late May she saw “a lot of people of Caucasian appearance” in the Lugansk glass factory. The pastor of the Protestant church also tells about a Caucasian, a member of the group that captured him. Volodymyr Koziuberda also said about a “Chechen” in his evidence. According to our sources in the City Department, Chechen women were based in the premises of the **Lysychansk District Pipeline Administration**, which also housed the “military commandant’s office”.

The evidence of people who were the victims of kidnapping and tortures in Lysychansk are given below; the descriptions of two murders are also provided.

KIDNAP OF ANTONIDA MELNYKOVA

The members of the mobile group managed to talk to **Antonida Fedorivna Melnykova (born in 1957)**, the head of the district election commission No.110 centred in Lysychansk, a victim of kidnapping and violence of militants. On the eve of the kidnapping, the district election commission suffered repeated intimidations and attempts to assault from the members of the IMGs, some of the committee members had been even imprisoned.

«All of us – the members of the district commission and precinct commissions – were persecuted. They began to send us threats. They phoned me and invited me to a meeting with Bolotov, who at that time was a self-proclaimed governor of the region of Lugansk. In response to these proposals, I laughed, saying, “Who is Bolotov, that bandit? I do not know and do not want to know him.” At first I was phoned by a woman who introduced herself as a Press Secretary of Bolotov, then by a woman who introduced herself as a “Secretary of the Central Election Commission”. On May 7 when we transferred the seals and documents to the territorial election commission in Popasna the premises was attacked, a member of the district election commission Serhii Lozovyi was kidnapped by the armed men and the documents were destroyed. “Soon, the same day the militants called me using the phone of Mr. Lozovyi and delivered an ultimatum: if I do not come to Popasna, they will bring the commission members to barricades, to the SSU in Lugansk or to Sloviansk. Later Mr. Lozovyi was released. After 10 days, on May 17, the situation repeated in Kirovsk, where the members of the district election commission came to pass the documents. However, that time they managed to escape in time,” – says the woman about the background of her abduction and adds that at that time Popasna was already under the Russian flag – the first one in the region of Lugansk, while Kirovsk was still under occupation.

When on May 21 there was the first serious attempt to attack the district commission in Lysychansk,

commission members managed to escape and save the seal of the election commission. *“They entered the accounting department and began to smash everything in the room. When I said that I was a citizen of Ukraine and did not know any Bolotov, one of them racked the slide of his gun and put the barrel to my chest. The employees gave them all accounting documents, and I ran to save the seal of the district election commission... The militants plucked the Ukrainian flag off the wall in the room where the district commission met, broke out the doors, turned everything inside out, but failed to make anything with the safe; only PC and the documents were stolen.”*

Antonida Melnykova was kidnapped on July 24, around 10.30 a.m., when she went to see the SSU building and the Executive Committee of Lysychansk that were captured at the time.

“At the SSU building I saw the concrete plates in the way, anti-aircraft guns, and people in camouflage with machine guns. When passing by a group of people at the Executive Committee I suddenly heard someone shouting “Stand!” And they started clicking the shutters. I tried to run away, but stopped. The crowd was running after me and the first to run was Mr. Yeremenko, who became the second self-proclaimed mayor of Lysychansk later. He was the first to catch me up and with all his might hit me on the head, so I came off to the wall and hit my head. He shouted, “You, bitch, tramp! Hell, where did you put the stamp?” Among the crowd, there was a person who also was a member of the group that attacked the district commission on May 21: a tall, hefty man, with a musky voice. It took me as a kitten with one hand, and clubbed me with the second hand. The whole crowd pounced on me – they all beat me and dragged me by the hair. And then one of them said: “The commander said to take her to the base for questioning.” At that time a car drove up, an old yellow Zhiguli. They put me in the back seat between two armed men. I tried to talk to them, but the one who sat on the left (said he was 18 years old, maybe not 18, but he looked very young and, judging by his appearance, he was a drug addict) all the way beat me in my leg with the gun and said: “Shut up, bitch!” He called me a traitor. When we drove by the church – they made the sign of the Cross.”

Antonida Melnykova was brought to the Lysychansk glass factory, which was one of the main places of holding hostages.

“At that time there were already a lot of military equipment and vehicles at the territory of the plant; I did not see tanks, but there were armoured vehicles, anti-aircraft guns; the territory was full of armed men. Just before May 22 they took the first battle on the Tomashevskiy bridge. They were angry. When we got to the two-storey building of the plant, one of the terrorists took off my sunglasses and told me that I would never need them... Then another man came and said, “The commander said that the interrogation is cancelled. Put her in the firing ward.” We went down to the first floor and passed to the end of the corridor. The doors to all rooms were open, and I saw many people in camouflage there, someone sleeping and someone making dressings. When I was brought to the end of the corridor, they began to look for the keys to the firing room, put in a lot of work but did not find anything.”

Therefore, they did not manage to put a woman in the so-called “firing room”, because there was no key to it. She did not understand – was it just a “joke” or were they really going to shoot her, but changed their minds. A few hours later a “Commander” came (he ordered to call himself that way). Antonida Melnykova describes him as follows: *“Camouflage pants, a belt, a black shirt, bald and low. But I think it was not Mozgovyi. He said, “Your activists told everything about you... You are the member of BYT party.”* The woman replied that she was a representative of a candidate Tymoshenko at elections but she has never been a member of the party. *“Then he flung in my teeth that we conduct elections. I denied and said the elections were not held. I asked him what I was beaten for, and in return I heard that “our people do not beat anyone. Do you have any complaints?” I said no. After all, he told me, “If you want to live, give us the seal and the key to the safe” and ordered to carry me home to pick up the seal and the key... I think that they received premiums for the seals. The members of the other commissions called me and told that the militants were looking for seals at their homes and confiscated them, despite the fact that the elections were not carried out.”*

They returned to Antonida her bag, put her in the front seat of Chevrolet (*“It was evident that the car was just took away from someone because they looked at it and were amazed”*) and drove her home, where she gave the seal of the district commission No.110 to the militants.

The woman was hiding for over two weeks after the event, then she moved home, but did not switch

on the light and slept between the wall and the bed, so that if the militants come it would less likely that they would notice her. She went to the hospital only in June, “but I could not tell them the truth, and had to say that I fell down”. The woman describes the damages as follows:

“I had a leg bruised after hitting me with the gun; there were many bruises on my back and arms. They did not disappear over 2 months. The forehead was broken due to the hit against the wall. They also screw my arm, and it still remains nonworking.”



The scheme of former factory offices, where the militants lived and held hostages

Nobody knows what was situated in that so-called “firing room”. Remarkably, that was the room the members of the mobile group entered to due to the agreement with the Armed Forces of Ukraine, quartered in the premises of the Lysychansk glass factory at that moment. However, that happened even before the respondents explained to us in detail where they were kept and pointed to the location of the so-called “firing room”, and that’s why we did not require visiting that part of the building. The military men showed us just two rooms and, as it became clear later, in the other part of the corridor at the ground floor, saying that was the only place where people could be held hostage and that they could not let us to visit the other part for security reasons.



The premises inspected by the members of the monitoring group in the former office building of the Lysychansk glass factory



The second premises inspected by the members of the monitoring group in the former office building of the Lysychansk glass factory

“DISCIPLINARY” HOSTAGE

Many prisoners, including disciplinary ones were kept at the glass factory.

The participants of the mobile group managed to talk to a woman whose husband was a prisoner in early July because of a violation of the curfew, which was set in the city by the IMG representatives (22.00 p.m.).

She tells: *“At 22.05 or 22.10 p.m. my husband came out of the house to spend his friend who lives 3 minutes from our house. He did not return home. When I called him the subscriber was not available.”* Through her friends the woman found out her husband was at the glass factory. According to the information provided by her husband who refuses to communicate with our inspectors personally, the woman says the following:

“He was transported to the base in a trunk. He tried to escape from there and damaged the car, so they “took umbrage about him” even more. For violation of the curfew they usually gave 3–5 days, but because he had also damaged the car, they gave him 10 days of imprisonment. They took him to a room 3 to 4 metres. There was no light there. The room was full of people lying on the floor. He was sat on a chair, where he spent several hours. Then a man came, brought him forth to the corridor and began to ask him

about the drug dealers, but my husband did not know anything about them. For that he was beaten with arms and legs in the hallway. They usually got drunk and started beating everyone. The room contained 10–15 people, but that was not the only room there. The next day I went for him. I was told that they were right and their actions are justified. They allegedly had a log where they record everything. Later my husband told me that when they picked out his personal items, they recorded the time of detention and the list of items seized in the log.”

At 4.00 a.m. the man was waken up and ordered to wash the floor, clean everything and cook food. The alignment of prisoners was held at the glass factory every morning. *“A man with gold teeth, fat, was engaged with prisoners, his name was Lokha, nicknamed “Hnom”, but there were several persons with the same nickname.”*

The woman came there four times to persuade the guards to release her husband. In total he spent 5 days in captivity. He was beaten only on the first day during interrogation, and after that they did not touch him. After his release the man had *“bruises on his face, hands, arms, back, an ear was blue too”*, but he neither verified battery-induced injuries, nor filed a claim to the police.

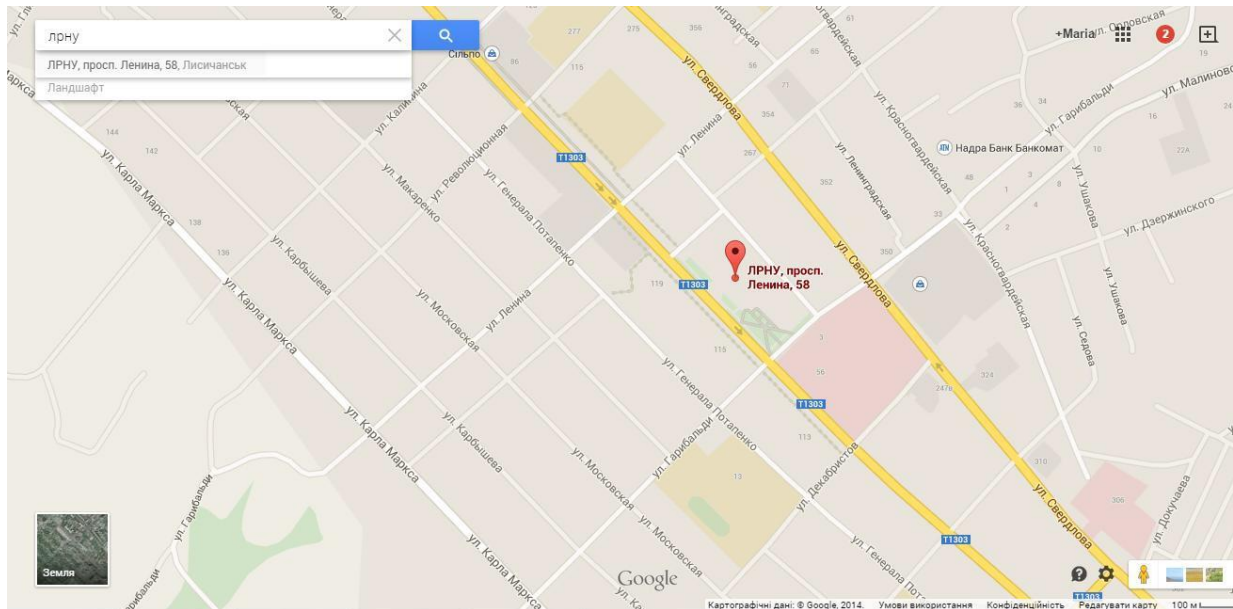
KIDNAP OF DMYTRO SKOROMOKH

The active propaganda in the city forced the IMGs representatives to hunt the “ghosts” of Pravyi Sector and the National Guard. A striking example is a case of a kidnap, holding hostage, beatings and torturing of **Dmytro Mykolaiovych Skomorokh (born in 1973)**, who worked as a loader in the “Luganskyi delicates” shop in Lysychansk. His case is expanding the map of places used by the militants for holding hostages. It turns out that they held them not only in the city but in the suburbs as well.

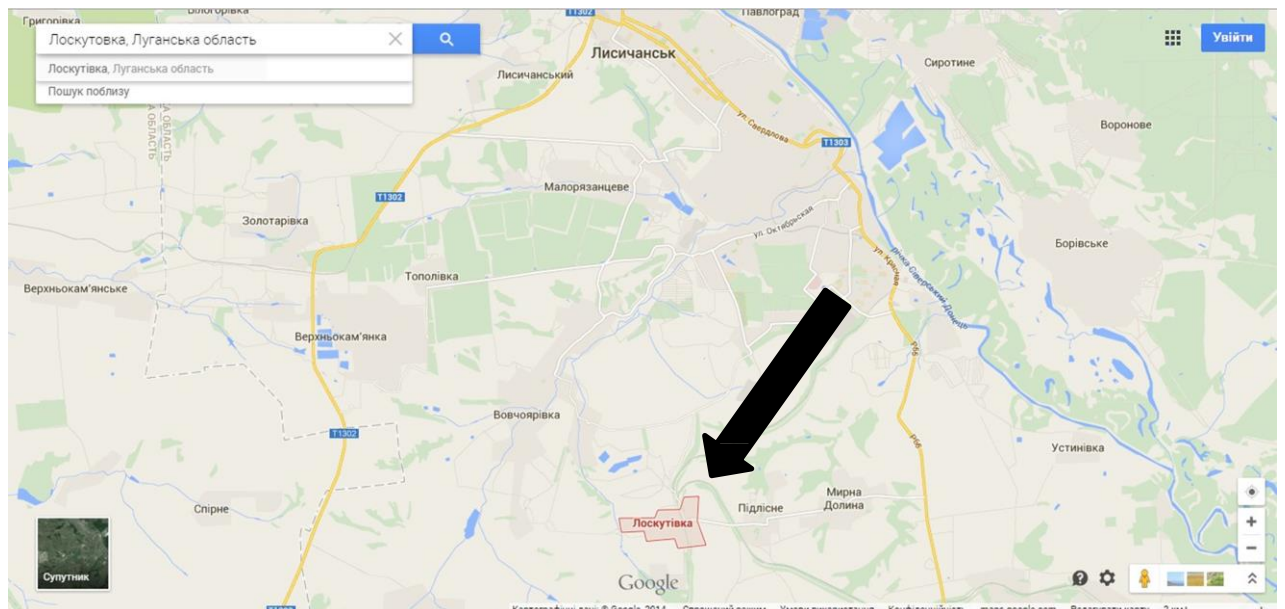
As at the time of inspectors’ stay in Lysychansk, Dmytro was not in the city, and thus the inspectors met his wife, **Nataliia Mykolaiivna Honcharova**, who described the details of her husband’s kidnap and her attempts to find and rescue him from captivity.

According to Nataliia, their family occupied pro-Ukrainian position from the very beginning and expressed their views in social networks. Nataliia works in the Lysychansk Executive Committee in the Office of Children’s Services. Due to her position she received threats (her colleagues passed her “greetings” from unknown people and advised her to remain silent). After all, those colleagues who like Nataliia’s pro-Ukrainian views, persuaded her to remove all the pro-Ukrainian content from her page in the social network on the ground that otherwise “they will come to take you, and then me”. Moreover, in late April unknown IMG members in camouflage uniforms and with weapons came on grey UAZ to the house of Nataliia and Dmytro. In rough form and with threats they said they knew that at that address a man from western Ukraine was living, that he had an automatic gun with him and threatened that soon Pravyi Sector and the National Guard would come and kill everyone. However, they did not answered the question who reported them on it. *“Then we called our neighbours and asked to confirm that we are local citizens and that none from western Ukraine is living here,” – Nataliia says. “Finally, they went away, and we decided to express our opinions more quietly.”*

On July 4, from 8.15 a.m., the boss of Dmytro who was already at work at that time (he usually came early, approximately at 6.00 a.m.) started calling to Nataliia. She told the woman that her husband was taken by the camouflaged men who came in UAZ, on which “Prizrak” was written. The car was waiting for Dmytro at the shop from the very morning, and as soon as he came and put his bike, he was kidnapped. As Nataliia is an employee of the Executive Committee, first she tried to influence the situation through the “People’s Secretary” of the self-proclaimed City Council Anatolii Yeremenko. In her presence he called on several numbers, but no one heard about Dmytro. At least, he told so to Nataliia. Then Nataliia went to the building of the Lysychansk District Oil Administration where the so-called “military commandant’s office” was situated.



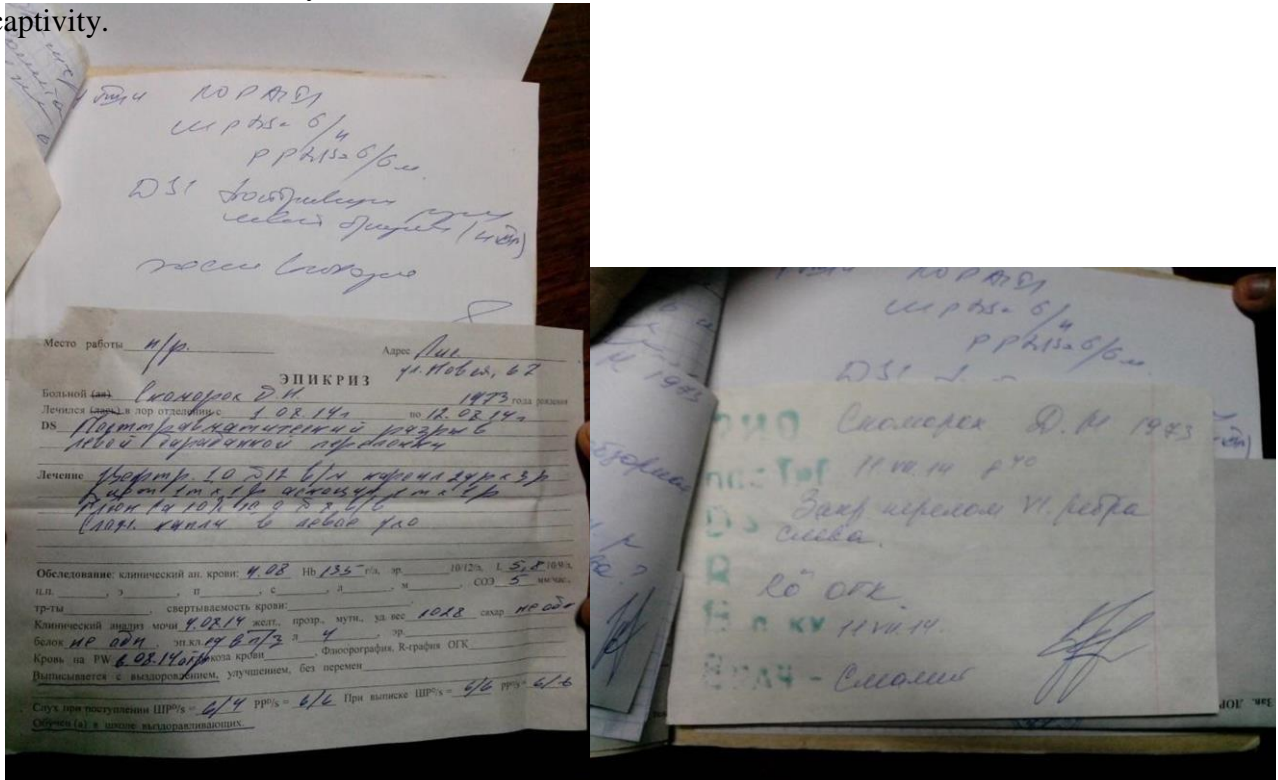
They advised her to write a statement about the disappearance of her husband. *“I wrote a statement addressed to the commandant of the military commandant’s office, I do not remember his name, because it is not mentioned any more. “The military commandant’s office” tried to play the role of a focal point because there were a lot of groups in the city that competed with each other.”* Dmytro’s colleagues from the shop who witnessed his kidnapping, refused to write claims to the police. In subsequent days, all the attempts to find Dmytro failed. The woman came to the Lysychansk District Oil Administration every day, they said that they were looking for Dmytro, but he was nowhere to be seen. Nataliia visited all the places of holding hostages, including the Security Service, the Prosecutor’s Office, the Lysychansk glass factory. *“When I came to different places for holding hostages, the first question everywhere was “What political views he has?”* Dmytro was released on August 10 around 15.00 p.m. He was kept captive for 6 days in total. The man returned home with numerous bruises, including a closed fracture of a rib. It was found that after five militants captured him, he was immediately taken to Loskutovka village 30 kilometres from Lysychansk to an abandoned military base.



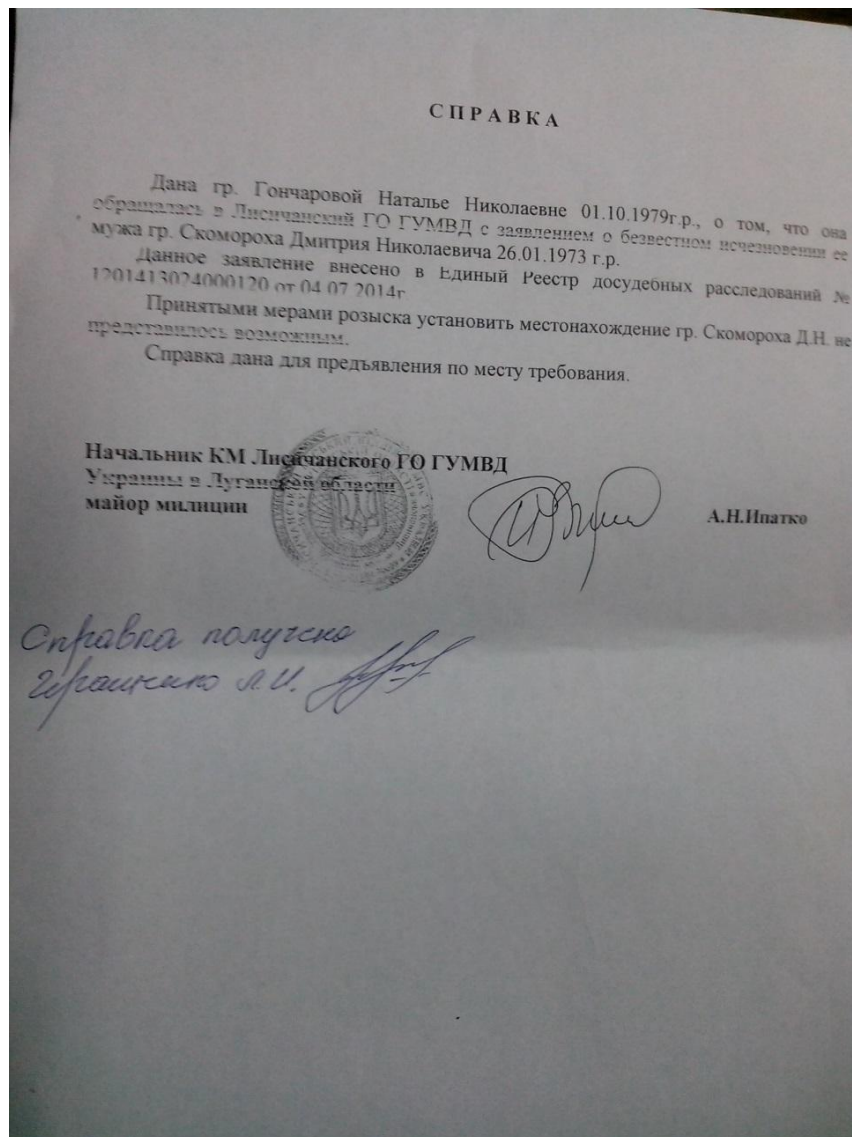
Dmytro was beaten for three days. In the worst manner – on the first day. They shot near the ears, forced him to dig a pit, threatened to cut off his legs, flogged with an ax near his feet. When beating him they demanded to give them some lists. Later it turned out that one of Dmytro’s colleagues from the shop, who was married to a member of the IMG, said her husband that Dmytro collected some lists of “militias” and transferred them to Pravyi Sector supposedly. Besides Dmytro, they held several

people in Loskutovka. He did not know them, but all those people had significant bruises.

Medical Records of Dmytro Skomorokh based on a medical examination held after his release from captivity.



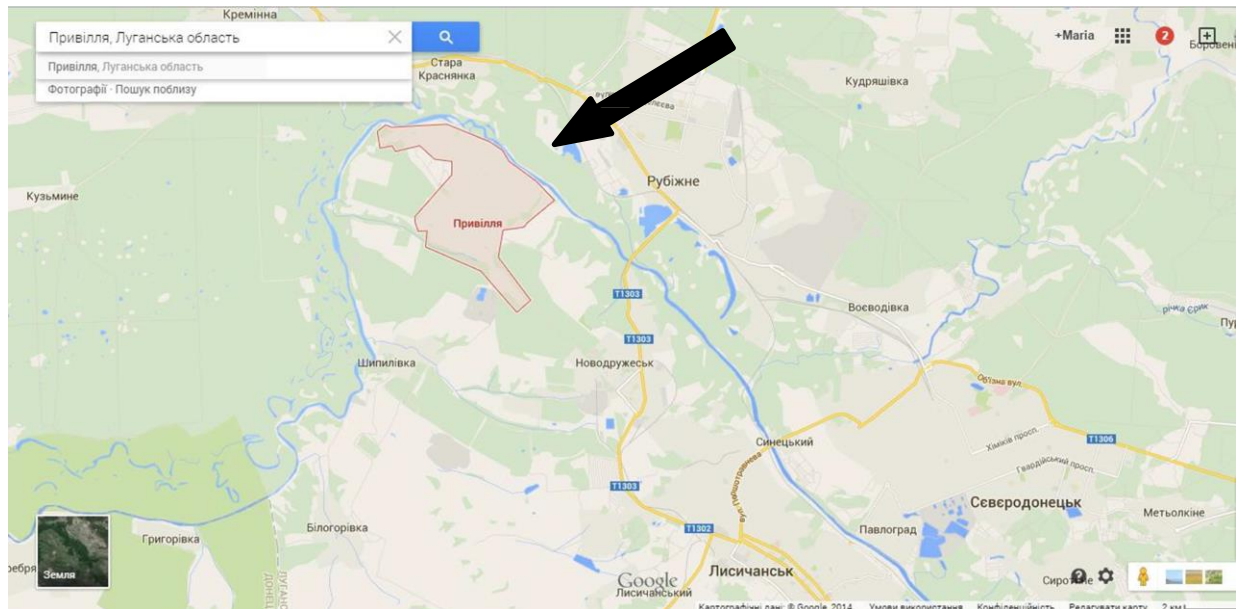
The police, whom Nataliia asked for help, have issued a certificate of its “helplessness”. “The measures taken to establish the location of Mr. D.M. Skomorokh did not give any result,” – the document explains.



KIDNAP OF THE PASTOR OF THE PROTESTANT CHURCH

Some cases of kidnapping and taking hostage in the region happen on the verge of ideological and personal reasons. It is obvious that the situation of legal chaos was used for the purpose of targeted massacre of certain people. As an employee of the Office of Children’s Service, Nataliia Honcharova said that she faced the cases where the wives asked the militants to “educate” their husbands – to take them to the trenches, for example. However, then there was the problem to get them back.

A striking example of competing of the ideological and personal reasons is a case of a kidnap of the **pastor of one of the Protestant churches** (he wished not to publish his name) who was caught right in the premises of his church in Pryvillia village near Lysychansk.



On June 27, immediately after the worship in the church approximately 6 masked men with guns entered it and shouted: “Everyone on the floor!” *“They started to run, scratch around,” – the pastor says. – “One of them, who was without a mask, had Caucasian features. They looked as if they were frightened; I think they had a drink before. One of them threatened my wife that he would shoot her. There also were little children in the church. One shouted, “Grab the children!”, but they managed to escape.”*

The man is sure that the gunmen stopped in Pryvillia not by chance, because earlier they have never seen men with guns in this area. *“One of our brothers married the girl whose family did not approve him, because he is a former prisoner, who, moreover, occupied a pro-Ukrainian position. The brother of that girl Ruslan belonged to the militia, and was a member of the guard, that came to capture us. It was a kind of personal revenge, but it developed into another motive – namely on which side we stand. A few weeks before my wife and I travelled to western Ukraine with a visit and that was the first thing I was questioned even in the church.”*

The militants arrived in two cars – a light motor car and a jeep. Two people – the pastor and the mentioned man who did not satisfy the militant Ruslan for personal reasons – were loaded into a car and taken first to some place unknown for our interlocutor which he names “a box”. The pastor’s hands were tied; all his personal items were collected, including a mobile phone and money.

“When we were brought to the box, they immediately placed a gun to the back of my head and began to shout: “Speak!” I asked, “What should I say? Ask any questions.” Then they sat me on a chair, and began to ask what drinks did we give to our faithful to make them “dumbed down”, they began to examine our veins, asked who the chief of our church was. Subsequently, they poured our legs with gasoline, threatening that they would scorch them, but they didn’t.”

One of the gunmen struck a violent blow at the pastor, resulting in broken upper jaw. The second man was beaten even more, required to file an application for divorce with Ruslan’s sister. The pastor says that one of the fighters called themselves Russian. There were no people in the box except them. When they were taken out after questioning, the man saw a yard and an unfamiliar suburban area.

“When they led me they constantly tilted my head towards the ground, so it was difficult to spy out the land. Then I was worn a neck face mask so that I did not see anything, and the other kidnapped person was put down to the trunk. We were taken to the glass factory. We arrived there late at night. Someone ordered to put us to different places. I was led to a former bomb shelter. I spent one night there alone. I was in a terrible state; my broken jaw ached severely. But they were irritated by my calm-tempered behaviour.”

On June 28, in the morning, the pastor was led to a local “barrack” to work. He was given a companion with whom they cleaned the second floor of the former office building, inhabited then by the militants’ chiefs. *“My companion was also brought at night. It turned out that he was driving drunk, and when they stopped him, he began to snap, and got shot in the foot. He got that ball out of his foot, and he was made dressing in the first-aid post, and later they took him for dressing to the hospital.”*

After cleaning the pastor was sent to unload “Ural” loaded with weapons. There were dozens of grenades and hand-held grenade launchers. After unloading he was cleaning the combat’s rooms on the second floor of the former factory office, and then – digging trenches.

The militants in the territory of the glass factory did not have any stripes in their camouflages, only the St. George ribbons. According to the pastor, there were about 500 militants there.

During the day of his stay in captivity, the pastor saw over 20 prisoners in the territory of the glass factory. They were located in two rooms on the ground floor of the former office building at the end of the corridor. He managed to communicate with some of them. He had even known one of them before. *“He was no stranger to the bottle, an unemployed. It turned out that he was a former prisoner from Stekolnyi District. When he was asked to go to the militia, he agreed... Two hostages told, they were detained simply because they went to the store. One was accused of being the member of Pravyi Sector and beaten strongly for it, although he was very frail, looked as if he was 45 years old.”*

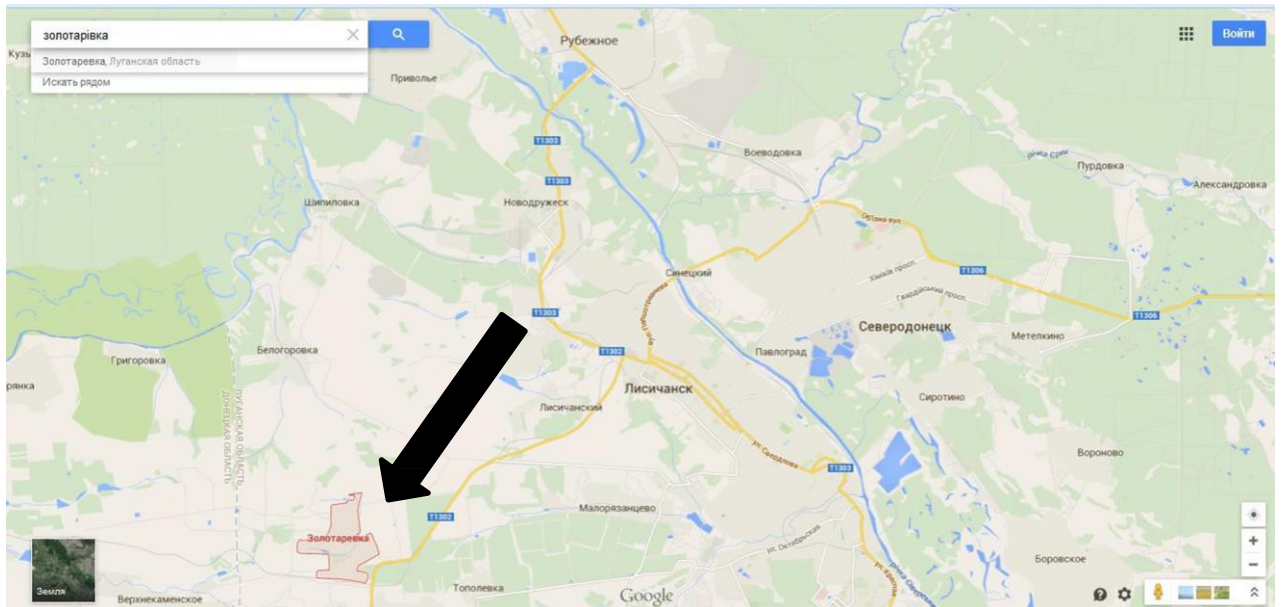
Later in the afternoon, at about 17.00 p.m., the pastor was put handcuffs on and led to a big shop, where the militants had the shooting range. They said, “Now the “doctor” will come to talk to you”. The “doctor” and another one, I thought, a Russian, questioned me what I knew about the mopping-up operation. I told them I knew that city citizens were talking about some mopping-up operation, but I did not know what it was”. They asked me about the murder of children in Shchastia, asked how I will meet the Ukrainian army. During the interview, the doctor fired over my head first with the gun, and then he took a machine gun and clubbed me in the shoulder. It lasted about half an hour.”

Then the pastor was led to one of the rooms where about 10 prisoners were kept. It was difficult to breathe for the man because of his broken jaw, but the militants did not let him go to the hospital, a nurse examined him at the site, although it did not help.

They were about to send him to dig trenches in the city, but it was found that his mother and aunts stood at the entrance of the glass factory demanding his release. They did it because one of his aunts was a member of the Communist Party and knew the man in chief at the glass factory. His nickname was “Hnom” (that person was already mentioned in the evidence of the wife of a kidnapped man, who was also a prisoner at the glass factory).

The pastor has spent about one day in captivity. After his release he left Lysychansk and returned after the city was liberated. He did not file a claim to the police.

MURDER OF MR. PETRENKO, THE HEAD OF THE INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT OF POLICE IN LYSYCHANSK



At the time of his kidnapping Vitalii Petrenko was an acting Chief of the City Police Office of Lysychansk. On November 3, 2014 he had to celebrate his 41st birthday. After the outbreak of armed occupation a significant part of the police personnel went on vacation or sick leave. V. Petrenko decided to stay in town, but, according to his wife Nataliia (with whom our inspectors had an opportunity to meet and who is working as the Head of the personnel department of the City Police Office of Lysychansk), refused to meet the rebels. She said that most police officers remained faithful to the oath.

On May 25, armed men came to V. Petrenko's office and took away from the police station all Kalashnikov assault rifles and ammunition to them. Then V. Petrenko began to insist that his wife and children should leave Lysychansk because of the threat to them. Nataliia with children moved to the Crimea temporarily and stayed there until July 4.

Vitalii Petrenko was kidnapped on July 8. The man went to work, but did not get there. Before the kidnapping Nataliia's husband did not say anything to her, but she noticed that it was "something wrong" with him. He continued to insist that Nataliia and children should leave the city.

On July 8 at 8.30 a.m. Nataliia heard persistent knocking at the door. It turned out that her husband's colleagues came; they realized that something was wrong when V. Petrenko did not appear at work on time. At that moment, his phone had not already answered. That night Nataliia did not sleep at home, then she went to Svatovo, and then to Kharkiv, where she stayed until July 28.

Since then and until mid-September, Nataliia did not hear anything about his husband.



Vitalii and Nataliia Petrenko

On September 18, Nataliia was reported that they had found the body, which might belong to her

husband, and was invited to the identification. The body was not exposed to identification, but they found a driver's license issued for V. Petrenko in the pocket. According to Nataliia, her husband's body was found in Zolotarivka, it had stayed there from July 12. He was allegedly taken to the military enlistment office in Severodonetsk prior to the murder. But it is currently unconfirmed, and Nataliia does not have access to the file. V. Petrenko was buried on September 19.

According to Nataliia, her husband was killed because he “did not want to get in touch with the separatists”.

According to information obtained by us from various sources, V. Petrenko was shot in the head. The investigation has already determined four persons involved in his murder. All of them are the members of the IMG, one of them is already dead, and the other three have left the city and stay at the territory controlled by the militants. According to our sources in the City Police Office, V. Petrenko was sold out by his colleagues.

There was a version that V. Petrenko tried to escape somewhere, but Nataliia rejects it. There is also some unverified information about other reasons of V. Petrenko's murder related to “internecine quarrelling” between the police officers. However, his former colleagues insist that he died because of his position; and a stand in memory of the former Head of the Investigation Department was hanged in the City Police Office.

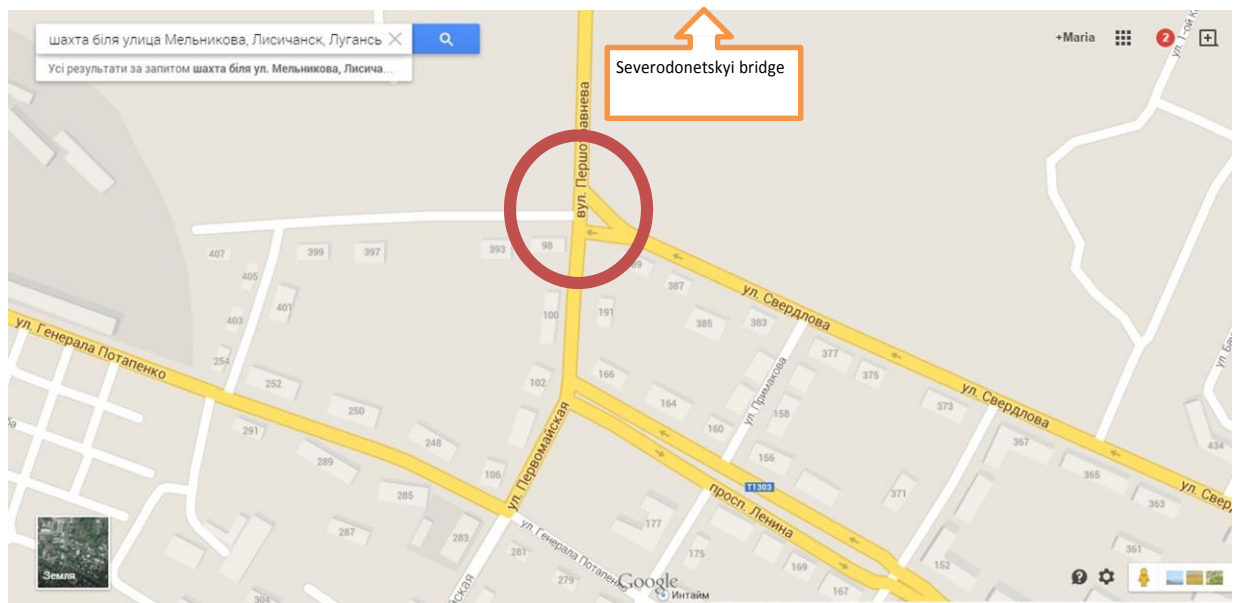


A stand dedicated to V. Petrenko at the City Police Office of Lysychansk.

SHOOTING OF THE “GREEN CORRIDOR”

A separate story that deserves attention is **shooting of the “green corridor”**, which passed through Proletarskyi (Severodonetskyi) bridge. It was announced for a few hours during the operation of the Ukrainian troops to release Lysychansk on July 24. The peaceful population that tried to leave the city through the corridor was shot by the IMG. In particular, the TV spot prepared by the correspondent of “Inter” TV channel Ruslan Smeshchuk as of July 24 devoted to the complex process of liberation and in particular to the “green corridor”, reads as follows: *“Hundreds of people are leaving the city... Unfortunately, it did not go without victims among civilians. When we were at one of the checkpoints through which people were rescued, a terrorist sniper killed an elderly man. It happened at the time of the car inspection; a man was standing in line with a soldier, and at that point the sniper shot. And other citizens of the city told us that during the evacuation they fell under the militants’ fire. “I waded through the bushes, as they drove fire on me”.*” <http://podrobnosti.ua/podrobnosti/2014/07/24/986190.html>

The inspectors failed to meet a man in Lysychansk, whose father, according to him, was shot dead in that “green corridor” with a sniper bullet. It happened at the intersection of Sverdlova and Pervomaiska Streets, which locals call “Melnykov’s turn” (from the name of the mine located nearby).



A man who wanted to remain anonymous described the details of this event as follows:

“July 24 was the third day of bombing. My wife was 5 months pregnant and I had not already sleep for three days. We decided to leave the town. I noticed that movement towards Severodonetsk bridge started; some people were on foot, some on bicycles or motor transport. At that time my aunt, who lived in Svatove district, called us. She said that she had heard the militants had opened the “green corridor” in Lysychansk. We did not have such information. Then my sister called and said they had already left for Severodonetsk by taxi, and urged us to leave. She said that the “green corridor” would be open until 18.00 p.m. I made a decision to leave. I tried to call a taxi, but failed. After all, my father insisted that he would take us out of the city. We agreed with him and then went to Sverdlova street. The ambulances and other cars were passing by. I was with my wife, her younger brother and our neighbour with her daughter. My father did not come for a long time, so we flagged down a passing car. Everyone got into the car, but there was no seat for me, so I remained to stand by the road waiting for my father. After some time he came and we started going. And suddenly at the “Melnykov’s turn” a ball flied from the alley, passed through the driver’s door and entered the left side. I thought the injury to be minor. I asked, “Are you wounded?” He answered “yes” but managed to stop the car. He was lifeless in a few seconds, looking forward with a frozen look. I brought him to the central hospital in 5–10 minutes. They responded immediately, but it was too late. The father was taken to the morgue. And then the real battle began. Bullets flew overhead. I realized that there would not be any “green corridor” any more.”

Our interlocutor is a former Ukrainian contract soldier – a member of a peacekeeping force in Kosovo. He believes that this shot could not be a coincidence.

“At first I thought: well, the sniper wouldn’t fire at us, and then saw several cars with the same bullet holes on the side. It rather was a tactic and not a coincidence... When Ukrainian troops approached the city, they began to fight a defensive action. I think they had some combat experience. The majority of militants were under their leadership, fulfilled their orders,” – the man says.

There was the only road to leave the city so all people and all transport vehicles were driving along it. The ball was not even taken out of the body of the dead man. A pathologist made a conclusion on the death of the man in the absence of his son. According to our source, *“As far as I understand, the pathologist made an assessment on the eye, because there were a lot of dead people. He wrote in the*

certificate that the death was due to a shell fragment wound.” When asked whether he tried to challenge this conclusion, the man replied: “You know, the situation was such that there wasn’t any police officers to accept the claim... There were no representatives of the Ministry of Internal Affairs... There were military men, but it was not their function. I had one goal – to bury my father properly. But even this was not possible: we buried him on July 27 without a priest. Although we can say that we were lucky that we even managed to bury my father. It was possible only thanks to friends at the funeral service. When they opened the morgue so that I could take the father’s body, I saw a mountain of dead bodies there.”

Soon the man was called to the City Police Office where he spoke with the investigator. “*He pointed me to an article. They see it as a result of a terrorist act: they think that one size fits all.*” The man was not informed on the course of the investigation. But the fact is that he does not believe that the guilty will be found and brought to responsibility.

The inspectors were able to visit the scene of the crime together with the interlocutor. The man showed the place where, in his opinion, the sniper was and from where a shot could be made. This is the roof of the house No.381 in Sverdlova Street. The attic of the house is not closed, and the traces of probable shoes are visible on the wall at the entrance to the attic. The inspectors could easily get to the attic. However, they failed to find some traces of sniper there.



381 Sverdlova Street, from where a sniper could make a shot



The attic of the house No.381, from where a shot could be made



Approximate place of the car shooting.



Entrance to the attic of the house No.381



The attic of the house No.381

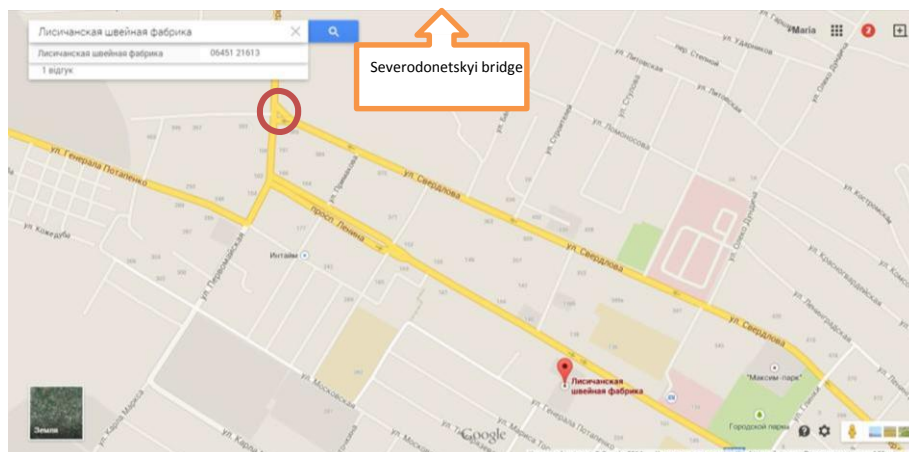


Probable sniper's position (view from inside)

In addition, our interlocutor mentions several important episodes the members of the mobile group were unable to verify, but they still need to be reviewed.

The first story was a car with children, which allegedly was also shot in the “green corridor”. The man says, *“I saw a red car. There was a table with a word “children” at the windshield. I saw that a car was chock-full with children and begin waving them with my hands, saying “where you are going, stop!” The driver did not respond. I heard that a bit later that car was shot... I also know that the family from the house opposite was shot when leaving the corridor. I think that they could be in that car just because I know that before leaving they took a lot of children of their neighbours with them... My wife told me that she saw how people in the column who had already passed the bridge just fell down from shots.”*

The second story was told by the man referring to his colleague. *“He saw a minibus approached to the garment factory, which is opposite to the bus station. A Chechen came from it (he served somewhere in the Caucasus and can distinguish them), lay down on the grass, smoked, examined his rifle and after that climbed onto the roof of the garment factory. He was not alone in the car. Apparently, they were transported to positions. It was on July 24. No one saw snipers in the area before.*



According to our interlocutor, after the release the Ukrainian army warned the residents that many snipers left in the city, so it was not desirable to move the streets yet. It was not official information but the rumours that passed from mouth to mouth.

The third story that needs to be reviewed is as follows: *“Even female snipers worked on the waste piles as it was a very comfortable position. They shot people right and left. Local citizens also found the shields and the items of ammunition that were much smaller than those used by men.”*

The mobile group found out the information on the cases of capture of the following people in Lysychansk. However, they either refused to communicate with the mobile group or were not found by us.

- The head of the “City Heating System” Utility Enterprise was kept in the building of the Prosecutor’s Office for about a week because he refused to pay wages the IMG participants who bunked off for obvious reasons.
- A former professional soldier was ransom kidnapped and for about a month held hostage at the glass factory. He was forced to fight for the LNR, but refused and escaped later. Apparently, it was the man mentioned in the story of the Protestant Church pastor. *“We unloaded weapon from Ural together with the reserve officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. At that time he already was there for 19 days. He was sent to dig trenches in Sloviansk, twice “shot”, they tried to force him to serve the “LNR” but he refused.”*
- The militants searched for the Ukrainian teacher from the school No.8, because she expressed support to Ukraine.
- According to unconfirmed information, the Head of the Civil Defence of the Citizens of the Lysychansk Executive Committee committed suicide because of pressure on him from the militants in late May. He was threatened and demanded to prepare bomb shelters properly; they said he would be killed otherwise. However, his suicide was recorded as a heart attack. But no one knows what is written in the medical certificate.

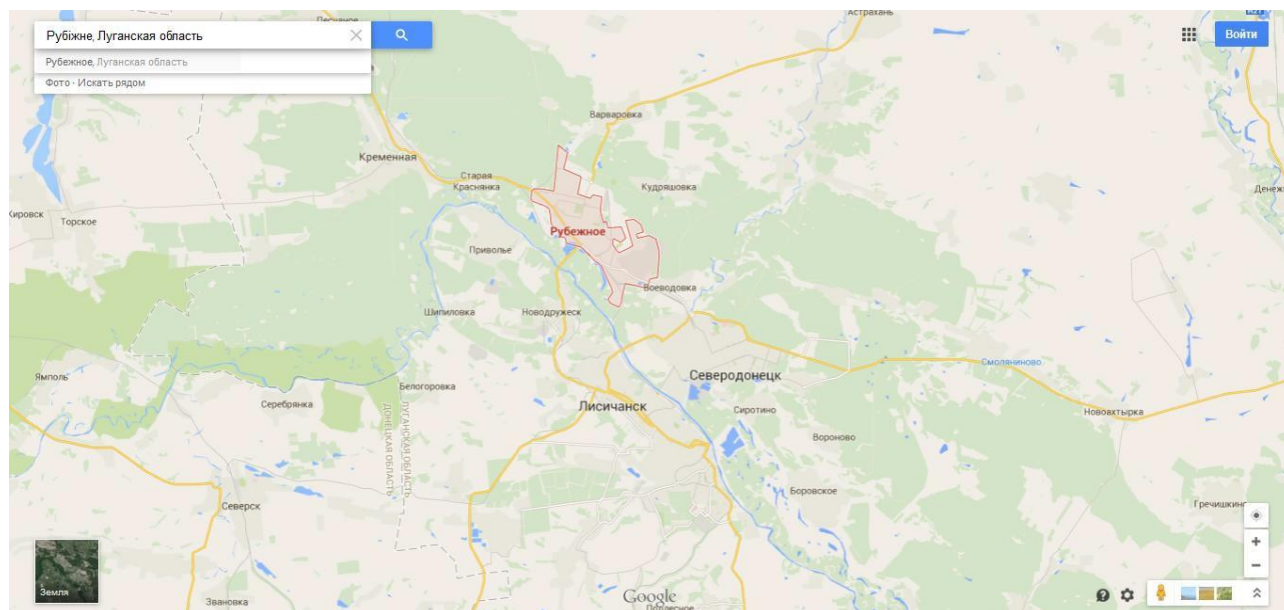
INVESTIGATIONS

From our sources in the law enforcement authorities we managed to get a printout of the complaints about illegal imprisonment during the occupation registered in the Unified Register of Prejudicial Inquiries (referring the statements from June to September 2014). There are 37 statements and all of them have an almost identical plot: unknown persons in camouflage illegally imprisoned or kidnapped a citizen X. Only a few of these 37 cases were closed. It should be noted that not all the victims of kidnaps and tortures filed their claims to the police. Such appeals are rather an exception. Therefore, we consider drawing conclusions about the number of hostages based on this list inappropriate.

The number of reported murders is 21. However, a significant portion of them made the deaths that occurred because of shell fragment wounds. The mission pays special attention to the fact that some of the remains were found at the same place – Shkliar reservoir. This is a popular fishing place located in Lysychansk. According to unconfirmed information, there was situated a military unit No.21335 in Soviet times.

All the cases related to the period of occupation and activities of the IMG are under the jurisdiction of the SSU. Therefore, the Ministry of Internal Affairs informed us about the progress of their investigations. We are currently waiting for the SSU reply to the request for information.

Rubizhne



CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS IN THE CITY IN THE PERIOD UNDER REVIEW

On May 22, approximately from 2.00 to 6.00 a.m., the gunfight with automatic weapons was heard in Rubizhne, in the area of Tomashevskiy bridge. Firefight and explosions continued until morning. Locals constantly heard heavy-calibre guns shots, and perhaps mortars shots or grenade launchers. The bridge over the river Donets was blown. That morning even mobile communications went wrong.

On May 23, UkrSotsbank stopped its work in Rubizhne. Rubizhne became a battlefield.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R-DclQZFp4U#t=73>

On May 27, explosions and shooting were heard, the reason was unclear.

On May 28, the militants used stolen ambulances to transport ammunition. The unidentified persons shot residential areas of the city the same day. No one was injured during the night shooting in Rubizhne, but 6 houses were partially damaged. The ATO Speaker Viacheslav Seleznev said that it was not the Ukrainian Army to make shots at residential districts. The militants shot at the ATO roadblocks and residential areas of the city. They fired with automatic grenade launchers (presumably AGS-17 and AGS-30) as well as with mortars from the residential area of Trudova Street.

On May 30, the militants blocked the road to Rubizhne.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEg3nuEp1UM#t=98>

In the night from June 4 to 5, from 22.00 p.m. to 00.30 a.m. and later at 4.00 a.m., the citizens of Rubizhne heard explosions. Some were very strong, sounded like blasting waves, in the Krasniankiy District on the outskirts of Rubizhne. But the Tomashevskiy bridge had been already blown up by then. Locals not only heard but also “saw” explosions: the rockets hung in the air for a moment, the fire flew towards the 7th district and a school No.10 after the explosion.

On June 15, the militants attacked a checkpoint of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The checkpoint was located between the village Kransnianka and the city. The battle began at 14.00 p.m. and lasted over two hours. Powerful explosions and machine-guns seriously alarmed the citizens of Rubizhne who had already become accustomed to the night gunfire, but the daily battle forced many people to seek shelter.

On June 23, Mozgovyi's militants fired the checkpoints of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. At about 4.00 a.m. the militants of Oleksii Mozgovyi made fire attacks on checkpoints of the Ukrainian army located in Stara Krasnianka and Varvarivka villages.

On June 28, at about 22.00 p.m., a group of armed men with automatic weapons, dressed in camouflage uniforms, fired the building of the Rubizhne City Police Office, then entered the premises of the City Police Office and having threatened the employees with weapons stolen two AK-74 and 120 rounds of ammunition.

On June 30, the citizens saw tanks in two courtyards in Rubizhne. Local residents reported of it. At 14.00 an anonymous message was received; it stated that armed men with automatic weapons wearing camouflage clothing and masks, under the threat of weapons stole large quantities of fuel at the gas station of Ukrnafta, located in Myru Street in Rubizhne.

On July 2, at 05:00 a.m., the house No.48 in Sportyvna Street, the houses No.33 and No.40 in Komsomolska Street, the house No.112 in Pomeranchuka Street in Rubizhne were damaged with shells.

According to SVS source, "on July 4, a group of armed separatists walked through the market in Rubizhne and collected "tribute" from some vendors.

On July 9, at 10.45 a.m., the premises of the Rubizhne City Police Office were entered by the armed people with automatic weapons wearing camouflage clothing. The Chief of the Police Office, Lieutenant Colonel D.H. Shpak, was taken handcuffed to an unknown direction. The place of his location is still unidentified.

On July 21, Rubizhne was freed from the militants, and the Ukrainian flag was run up over the Executive Committee.

Rubizhne was on the outskirts of active militants' activities within the "chemical triangle" Severodonetsk–Lysychansk–Rubizhne to some extent. In fact, there was no complete occupation there except the headquarters of local Afghans loyal to the LNR. That headquarters was located in Lenina Street near the "Lastochka" shop. The flag of the LNR was planted at the headquarters entrance. Nevertheless, locals still were stolen, but transported out of town immediately and kept in various places. It can be assumed now that everything depended, in fact, on the certain IMG that hunted them.

According to our source in the Rubizhne Police Office, "a group from Rubizhne" was engaged in tortures in Severodonetsk. The main goal of their activities was financial gain. According to the source, those militants who were in the city went to serve Dromov (one of the chieftains). According to the policeman, local drug addicts got the most, but not for the reason that the militants cared for human health and struggled with drug addiction, but because they believed they could "bring down money" from the relatives of those people. According to the source, the militants were not interested in "miserable pro-Ukrainian activists".

The presidential elections never took place in Rubizhne in May as several voting stations faced attacks of Chechens. According to local activists, those Caucasians were killed by other militants later for selfish reasons.

The inspectors have documented several cases of kidnappings of people from Rubizhne. They were transported from there to Severodonetsk, Lugansk and Lysychansk.

KIDNAP OF LIUBOV X.: captured in June and released in 12 hours

A local social activist and a pensioner Liubov X. starts observation of the events from April. At that time there was a “fight of rallies” – pro-Russian and pro-Ukrainian – in the city and in the region as a whole. During one of pro-Ukrainian meetings, a well-known case of hard crackdown of pro-Ukrainian activists of Rubizhne by the criminals happened. People were choked with Ukrainian flags. Vasyl Liutyi, a music teacher from the school No.9 and a pro-Ukrainian activist, was tied to a tree in the centre of the city and people victimized him, and did not let a paramedic who arrived with the emergency crew to provide him medical care. After that the paramedic went away with the words “I also have the family, and I want to live too”. Later Liutyi went to western Ukraine.

According to Liubov X., during the occupation there was even an underground resistance headquarters in the city, which included a few dozens of pro-Ukrainian activists; Liubov was also the member of that organization. They even had a chance to meet during that period, albeit secretly.

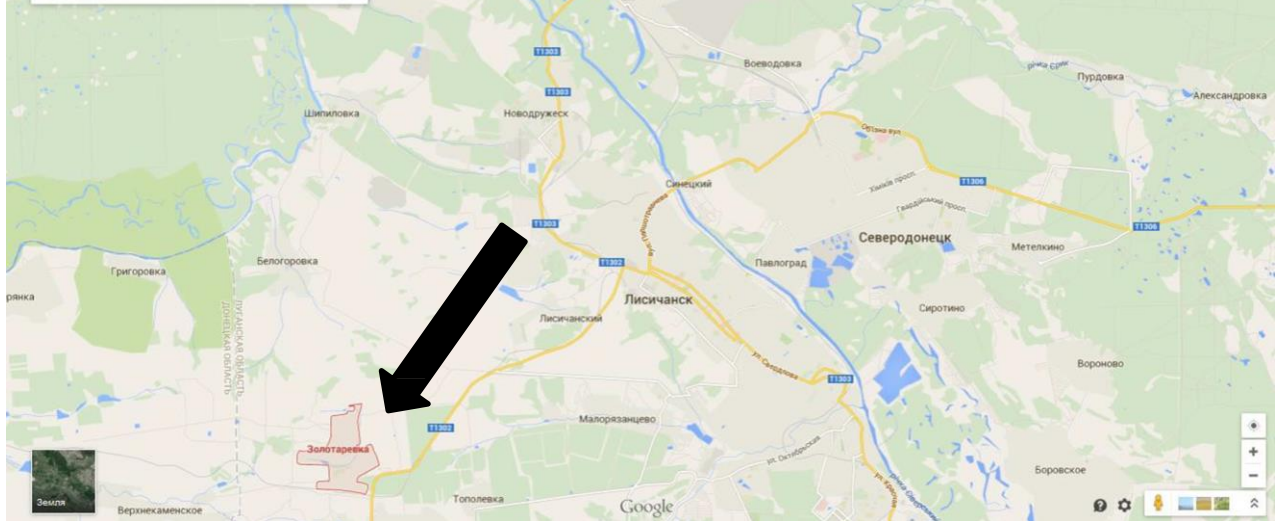
Liubov became a victim of kidnapping, though a loyal one if compared to the others. It happened in June. The woman does not remember the exact date. About 22.00 p.m. someone called on her mobile phone, and a familiar voice asked for a meeting. She felt a threatening tone, so decided that she could not refuse the flagitating for the meeting. Soon a “cool” car without license plates came to her yard. Two men sat in the car: the woman knew one of them; he was a former police officer, whose name she does not want to mention. The second one, she believes, was an Afghan. Both men were in camouflage; the car was apparently stolen. At the checkpoints on the way from Rubizhne to Severodonetsk the men showed their “IDs” issued in the LNR. The woman was taken to the SSU of Severodonetsk where the hostages were held. One of the men instructed her: “*Just do not tell that you are pro-Ukrainian*”. On the way she was told that she must “identify the stupid jerks”. On her arrival, Liubov Mykolaivna was brought to the basement of the SSU, where it became clear that she was taken for the “identification”. First, she was shown a former police officer, who worked in Rubizhne as a policeman (then he was engaged in private law practice) and, according to the activists, had a bad name as the person related to drugs. She saw him tied to a chair, with a bag on his head. When asked whether she recognized him, Liubov said, “*I do not recognize him*”. Then the woman was shown another detainee – a former prosecutor (then he was engaged in private law practice, along with the above-mentioned person). There were traces of blows on the man’s body; he was sitting in a corner in the basement, but in another room. She was asked to identify him, but she refused again, referring to the fact that she did not know him.

This section contains the information on both men’s stay in captivity.

The woman claims that she felt a smell of a corpse in that basement, but she did not see any other people or dead bodies there. She was not beaten, tiered, handcuffed etc., and treated as correctly as it could be in those circumstances. Liubov says that in the yard of the SSU she noticed many cars without license plates. In her view, it looked like all those cars had been stolen.

She was taken home on another car in the morning. On the way she was told that “*we know all your addresses*”, and those words sounded like a threat. They also said that “*if our people come – we will kill your people*”. One of the men admitted to Liubov Mykolaivna that he was invited to the LNR as a “specialist” and it was not easy for him to leave them. At that point the episode with her kidnap was exhausted.

KIDNAP OF VOLODYMYR KOZIUBERDA: kidnapped in June and kept hostage for 3 days



There are several notable moments in the case of Volodymyr Koziuberda. In particular, he said that the hostages of the militants were forced to fight for the LNR, and many of them have been subjected to fear and agreed to it, especially those who were detained for “disciplinary” and not ideological reasons. In addition, Volodymyr is a witness of mass presence of the Russian troops in Lysychansk, whose representatives, according to the man, questioned him.

Volodymyr Koziuberda is a car mechanic from Rubizhne, calls himself an “ordinary busy bee” who has always had pro-Ukrainian views. He began to carry humanitarian aid to Ukrainian military men in March (the nearest checkpoint was behind Nova Astrakhan).

“One day in May when I passed the Ukrainian checkpoint with the field kitchen in my trailer, someone took a picture of me, in such an angle that the field kitchen looked like a gun. The photo was posted online, – Volodymyr says. – But only on June 22 when I was captured I became aware of the fact that they had declared a manhunt for me.”

Volodymyr refused to travel to the calls to Severodonetsk and Lysychansk realizing it was the risk zone. If compared to them Rubizhne was safe. Once he asked his son (born in 1994) to go to one of such calls.

“He had to get free in half an hour. But the connection was interrupted for more than three hours. Finally, I realized that something was wrong. Then his phone turned on, the son called me and said, “Dad, come to Lysychansk, please!” The phone was snatched from the hands up and somebody’s voice said that if I did not come in half an hour, then in another half an hour my son would be in Sloviansk digging trenches. They wanted to see me.”

As it turned out later, the son of Volodymyr Koziuberda has become a hostage of the militants already in Rubizhne when he came on call; 5 people began to beat him with guns immediately and put to the car. According to V. Koziuberda, a local policeman was present there at that time – *“without any masks or camouflage... He pointed his finger at my son and said, “Yes, this is a son of that tow truck driver.” Now that policeman left the city”*. One of the IMG participants got into Volvo 740 (Volodymyr’s son came by that car) and went away. Later they failed to return the car.

Volodymyr went for his son immediately. At the checkpoint near the “Proletarii” plant, which is situated on the Severskyi Donets River, he was put a bag on his head, put to the militants’ car accompanied with two people on both sides. His hands were not tied. The car moved on to Novozhruzhesk from there.

“We took my son there – he was kept in some kind of the headquarters. The room was situated in the centre near the theatre... I was with a bag on my head, but it was a bit transparent; and as I knew that area well, I understood where I was.”

After that Volodymyr and his son were taken to the Lysychansk glass factory. They arrived late afternoon. They were beat all the evening and all the night in the same room; the militants used the electric jolt, choked them with hands until they lost consciousness. The man claims that he was choked by a Chechen (“I determined it by his appearance, accent, name, although I do not remember his name”). According to Volodymyr, *“locals did not torture us, only Russians and Chechens. Two floors above us were filled with the Russian troops.”*

The first night he was held in a room on the first floor of the factory office facilities (at the end of the corridor), the second night – in an opposite room. The next night they did not beat him severely, but according to Volodymyr, there was a moral humiliation: *“for example, they could push out cigarettes on my hands...”*

“Even then, there were 95% of Russians, and no one was ashamed, no one hid. They said, that we, the Russians, had come to defend you, but you were sitting here, and did not protect your Donbas from “banderovtsy”, from the members of Pravyi Sector; they would come to you and kill you, they would eat your children and abuse your women. They showed their passports, rubbed our noses in them and said – we were from Rostov region, from Belgorod region. We, the Russians, had arrived there, but you were just sitting and drinking vodka. The fact was that they caught many citizens at night with a bottle of beer, and brought them to the glass factory, every night they captured dozens of them in such a way. Thus, 95% of them were Russians. With modern weapons, with the latest optical rifles. They made raids every night and went out as quietly as came – they tried to be invisible so that no one even noticed them. Those military men wore Russian chevrons. As they drove us to clean toilets, corridors etc., we saw all that”, – Volodymyr said.

At the glass factory Volodymyr noticed modern cross-country KamAZ trucks and the airborne combat vehicles stolen from the Ukrainian armed forces.

“We worked all day long at the plant. They beat us at night, demanding me to join their LNR. I refused and said to my son, “Son, endure beatings. It’s much better than these rascals will give you the machine in the hands and send you to fight in Sloviansk tomorrow.” At that time there were fierce battles in Sloviansk.”

Volodymyr had to deal with Oleksii Mozgovyi. *“When no one wanted to join their ranks, he was nervous a lot. He lined all the prisoners and began firing with a gun at our feet. Many were afraid – approximately 10 people fling out of the line immediately and said they would fight for the LNR. My son and I were the only political prisoners there.”*

However, the son was released the next day. According to Volodymyr, 20–30 people were permanently kept at the glass factory. Some people were released the next day, when the militants saw that people were weak and they did not need them.

Volodymyr was released three days later, on June 26, when, according to him, the militants realized that he would never join the LNR. Later, he was offered to buy his own car.

“In a week and a half after I came out of the captivity, they came to me and said, “Give us \$1,000 and we will return your car. I told them, “I will not give you a penny, I will not feed you. And that day my son and I went to Kharkiv to avoid another kidnap. The volunteers were worse for them than the military men were. They treated the volunteers worse than they did the prisoners of war. I personally know a man who was caught and taken to Lugansk because he had helped the army. He spent a month in captivity. There, in the SSU building in Lugansk; they mocked at him, and even cut off a half of his ear.”

Volodymyr and his son returned to Rubizhne in late July, three days after the liberation of the city.

KIDNAP OF VALERII KHARCHUK: was captured in May, released in two days

On May 7 approximately at 15.00 p.m. Valerii Kharchuk, a local entrepreneur, a deputy of the City Council of Rubizhne, a former assistant of one of the former deputies of the Party of Regions, was informed by the officer of the Prosecutor’s Office that “Khomenko (an acting mayor of Rubizhne) with armed men have stopped” on the outskirts of the city. He was offered to go there to find out what had happened. Valerii went to the district of the Molodizhne Lake. *“I came, saw Mr. Khomenko, Afghans, half of which was in the militia. They were talking about something. I left the car, approached and asked what was going on, who were that armed men. At first I was told that they just wanted to hijack the car, later they said that they were “our separatists”. “Yours – not ours,” – I said, turned around and left. But then they blocked the road with Opel Vivarium. 7 people stepped out of the car and opened fire in my direction. People were in black overalls, looked like the policemen. I went out and said, “You shoot at a wrong target, the militants are behind you.” But the answer was “So, our target is right.” After that they put me in handcuffs, then threw to the car. They specified my home address. One of the gunmen got into my car. They instructed me not to raise my head.”*



A photo of the approximate place of kidnapping

On the way to Severodonetsk Valerii's kidnappers, he said, wanted to grab a few more people in Rubizhne, but did not managed to do that. Noteworthy is the fact that on the way they took on the passengers, people in civil clothes, who pointed out where the activists lived. At checkpoints one of the men in the car introduced himself as the "Colonel of the LNR Army", and said that they had captured a member of Pravyi Sector. Valerii was brought to the SSU of Lugansk, and took to the 4th floor. A man with a sign "investigator Maloi" sat in one of the rooms.

"He asked my surname, my party affiliation, if I was on Maidan. I said that I was there 3 times as a tourist. "What ties with the nationalists do you have?" Itold him that I was just a victim of circumstances and they intentionally set me up – because I was undesirable. They called the police and checked if I really was not related to nationalist organizations. They said I really was not. But then the investigator said, "Still you are against us". I started to explain why it economically impossible to separate our region," – Valerii says.

Maybe that could be the end of his story if the "investigators" did not take his cell phone. *"One of the employees found my Viber conversation with a relative from the Crimea, where we spoke about Sloviansk. They began to accuse me that I was an agent of the SSU. They put a gas mask on me, started snapping a gun at the back of my head. They said, "Spill the beans!" I said I did not know what to tell. Then I was led to another room. They have brought two buckets of water there and said they would beat me with current. But they beat me only with a rubber stick. Later they beat me with the current as well, used the shock gun, simulated shooting. It lasted until 1.00 a.m."*

Then Valerii moved to another room. Militants found one more interesting conversation in his phone. *"They read another conversation with my sister Olena from the Crimea. I wrote that the Lugansk SSU was captured by the worthless people, corrupt SSU agents, the policemen, including members of the Berkut police unit who evaded legal consequences of their actions."*

In that room Valerii's nose was broken with a blow in his face. After that they made a break that lasted several hours and then tortures began again.

"They choked me two times. I lost consciousness twice. Then he said, "There is a safe, if we throw a grenade you will have time to jump into it, it's tested." He threw the grenade and run out of the room. The grenade did not explode. He returned, but I remained sitting on a chair as I sat before. He threw the grenade again, that time it exploded, but apparently it was not a fighting one but a sound. I had a light form of concussion. I was taken out to another room. The doctors measured my blood pressure and gave me some tablets."

Valerii fell asleep and when woke up he saw a guy sitting near him. It turned out he was "ultras" who was sitting in the SSU for a week because he wrote negative things about the LNR on the Internet. The guy did not know how the militants managed to spot him.

The next day they led Valerii to Kyril, "a hostage from Pravyi Sector" (he was beaten severely, frightened, with punctured feet), and asked him whether he knew Valerii.

Then – a new room again. A 55-year-old man came there; he brandished a knife in front of Valerii's face, shouting that if he had been taken to the 5th floor, "they would have cut off the stripes of his skin". In the evening they put Valerii in the car, worn him a face and neck mask and holding the

muzzle near his temple transported him to a house outside Lugansk. At the site they reported that tomorrow they would bring him to Sloviansk, led him to the basement and closed.

“They threatened to bring my wife and rape her right in front of my eyes. I told them that I would commit a suicide during the day. When the day was over, I ripped a can and cut my vein. I was sitting until fell unconscious. When I woke up in the morning, there was a puddle of blood in the room. I took off the mask and secured a vein. I found a metal corner and broke the door. Got out of the house and moved to another yard. No one was there, even a guard. But a man stood in the neighbouring yard. Without answering who am I and where from, he changed my clothes and transported me from there; he chose a by-pass road, passing all the roadblocks, except the one, but they did not stop us.”

Later Valerii was picked by his wife. He went to Kyiv for treatment. His wife Zhanna filed a statement to the police about the kidnapping of her husband, but there was no reaction.

KIDNAP OF AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY YEVHEN CHUDYK: captured on July 6, 2014, spent one day in captivity.

Yevhen works as an assistant attorney.

On Sunday, July 6, 2014, at about 13.00 p.m. Yevhen came to the office. At that time, he received a call from his boss telephone. However, Yevhen heard a voice of quite another person, who told him to go to the building of the SSU of Severodonetsk, captured by the militants at that moment, if he wanted to see his boss alive. They gave him 15 minutes to think it over. Yevhen went.

The SSU is located in Severodonetsk at Zavodska Street.

“My friend, a former officer of the Main Department of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine in Rubizhne, brought me there in his car. We decided that I should leave him my passport of the citizen of Ukraine, a cell phone and keys. We also agreed with him that if I would not call him back in 40 minutes then he would go to Rubizhne and did not wait for me anymore; at the same time we agreed to meet not at the SSU building, but somewhere in the city.”

When arrived to the SSU building, he saw two people in camouflage uniforms; one of them was holding a machine gun. Those two came to Yevhen and began to use foul language, then one of them hit him in the face with his fist and clubbed in the abdomen area. Then they handcuffed him and led to the SSU building. Yevhen saw the car of his boss and several cars without license plates in the yard.

Yevhen was brought to one of the rooms on the first floor. There he saw an underage boy who was with the kidnapers. They stroke Yevhen down to the floor; then they began to kick him and beat him with police batons. They did not beat him in his head.

“However, they said that I “end up in a bad way, etc.”, all accompanied by a rough foul language. I was required to witness that I “provided a crime-sponsored cover” to addicts and deal in drugs; and they asked me whom I provide that cover.”

After a short beating, Yevhen was brought into the ward in the basement, in which 7 more people were sitting (some locals of Rubizhne said they knew Yevhen and it was rumoured that he really dealt with “covering”). That resulted in the next beating. Striking Yevhen down to the floor again they started beating him with police rubber batons, shot twice with a traumatic revolver (the first bullet passed through his right hand, the second hit the right shoulder). Then he was handcuffed to a radiator, and they continued to beat him, at the same time requiring telling everything about the crime-sponsored cover he provided to the addicts.



They also wore a plastic bag on Yevhen's head, started to choke him with hands. Yevhen heard footsteps after a while and saw the man with whom he came from Rubizhne to Severodonetsk. They treated him in the same manner as Yevhen.

Later they brought Yevhen outdoors, showed some pits covered with sod, said that those pits are full of people they shot down, and that they would make the same with Yevhen.

"They gave me a spade and forced to dig my own grave. I was beaten with a club several times, because I seemed to be too slow digging my own grave. I dug a knee-high grave... I was told that was enough to cover me with sod. Then I was told to stick a spade into the earth, turn my back to them and face to the fence so that my brains would not splash the asphalt. I did it. They put a barrel of AK-74 to the back of my neck. The man who held the gun asked me once more if I wanted to own up to something, I replied that I did not commit anything. Then he raised the barrel a bit and made two shots, so that I felt the shots with my hair."

Yevhen fell to his knees; they struck a few blows, and made a round of shots at the ground around Yevhen.

Then he was taken to the room again. They continued to beat him and applied electric current.



“They connected two wires to my thumbs and turned a handle at a few discharges interval, every 3–5 minutes, for about 30 minutes. As the result, I had burns on my thumbs. All that time they demanded me to own up to crimes.”

After talking with the person whose nickname was “Barmalei” who required to admit all the “bad things” they put a construction bag on Yevhen’s head and began to beat him.

“Then they took the bag out of my head, “Barmalei” brought a metallic object – either a soldering iron, or a kettle, I do not remember. They burned both my heels with that object. They applied it for 10–15 seconds. Then, when it already heated, for about 5 seconds.”

Yevhen had to own up in order to protect his life. After a short beating he was taken to the office where he was left until the morning handcuffed. At about 6.00 a.m. they came again and started beating with a golf club in his legs.

Then Yevhen realized from the conversations that they started to solve the issue of his redemption. At noon they brought to the office Yevhen’s uncle, who gave the man UAH 40,000.

When Yevhen gave money to “Barmalei”, he was ordered to write a receipt that he gave UAH 30,000 for the “South-East Army”. Not UAH 40,000 but UAH 30,000 should be written in the receipt. And at that they emphasized that the money would be supposedly donated to the orphanage.

Once the money has been transferred, they returned Yevhen his documents, his telephone and released him from the SSU building.