



[Borders](#)

New “Borders” in Eastern Europe

Ukraine since the Annexation of Crimea and the Outbreak of the Conflict in the Donbass

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The principle of border inviolability within Europe was put into question in 2014 with the Russian annexation of Crimea and the breakout of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. These events created two new “borders” in Eastern Europe: one de-facto national border in the case of Crimea and a frozen frontline in the case of the occupied territories in the Donbass. Both came into being in contravention of international law and are negatively impacting people in Ukraine.

This March, it will already be three years since Russia annexed Crimea. When “little green men” in unmarked uniforms occupied Simferopol International Airport and government buildings in Crimea, it dealt a blow to the European post-war order. The annexation of Crimea by Russian special units, whose deployment was initially denied by President Vladimir Putin but then publicly confirmed a year later, violated applicable international law and undermined Ukraine’s territorial integrity. The annexation is also in violation of the fundamental principles that were defined in 1975 in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. This included the principle that the frontiers in the post-war European order are inviolable and that the territorial integrity of all states must be respected.¹

In Russia, by contrast, the annexation was celebrated as the “return to the fold of the motherland” or as “accession”. This perspective is bolstered by dubious historical claims and a campaign of glorification, meant to legitimise the annexation in the eyes of the Russian population. Under the control of the presidential “power vertical”, Crimea was made part of the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation in July 2016 with Rostov-on-Don as its capital. With this administrative move at the latest, the peninsula lost the special status of an autonomous region within Ukraine that it had enjoyed until 2014. Western sanctions have officially banned political and economic relations with Crimea

since the annexation, which means the peninsula is now isolated to a large extent. Water supplies from the Ukrainian mainland were cut off as well.

By January 2015, Ukraine and Russia had established a border regime that closely resembles what constituted a national border in the times of the Cold War. Many Crimean Tatars, representatives of Ukrainian NGOs and journalists who had to leave Crimea during the previous few years no longer dare to come visit relatives and friends on the peninsula. The human rights situation in Crimea, arbitrary arrests and political repression, such as the banning of the Mejlis, the executive-representative body of the Crimean Tatars, confirm that this caution is justified. The Ukrainian population living near the border is experiencing significant hardships; the loss of jobs based in Crimea for one has posed considerable challenges to the region.

The fact that borders can become uncontrollable and “permeable” can be seen along the Russian-Ukrainian border in the Donbass. Since the beginning of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine in the spring of 2014, over 400 kilometers of the Ukrainian border with Russia have no longer been under the control of the government in Kiev. This is allowing weapons, heavy military hardware, Russian soldiers and volunteers to enter the occupied part of the Donbass unhindered from Russia. As the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) only has access to two border crossings, it is finding it virtually impossible to document, let alone prevent, illegal entry and weapons deliveries.²



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Since the summer of 2014, the occupied territories have consequently experienced an increasing amalgamation with Russia and extensive disconnection from Ukraine. Civil servants and military personnel in the territories receive their pay from Moscow, the Russian rouble has displaced the hryvnia as means of payment, and the separatist leaders in the administrative bodies of the self-styled “people’s republics” take their political orders from the Kremlin. The education and healthcare systems are drifting apart. People living in Ukrainian areas adjoining the occupied territories no longer have

access to the hospitals there, which is still causing massive healthcare shortages. Educational qualifications gained in the separatist territories, where Russian curricula now dominate the teaching, are no longer compatible with the Ukrainian ones.³

The Ukrainian army and the separatists supported by Moscow confront each other at a distance of sometimes only a few hundred meters along a frontline referred to as the “contact line” in OSCE parlance. While there are now fewer reports in the German media on the



conflict in Eastern Ukraine than there had been following the high numbers of casualties of the battle of encirclement at Ilovaïsk in the summer of 2014 and of the clashes to control Donetsk Airport in the spring of 2015, the static warfare is continuing with heavy losses on both sides. The humanitarian situation of people living along the contact line or in no-man's-land, the "grey zone" between the positions, is intolerable.

However, the occupied territories are not totally isolated as is the case for Crimea. Until March 2017 some economic relations had remained in

place. Even though the newly adopted economic blockade prohibits trade with the occupied territories, people continue to cross the contact line. The five border crossings are very busy, used by some 20,000 people every day. In 2016, eight million people crossed the contact line. These are predominantly people who go to collect their monthly pension payment in Ukraine.⁴

While the checkpoints at both new "borders" are manned by border officials and soldiers, there are some differences between the two border regimes. In the case of Crimea, a de-facto national border has developed, constituting a violation of international law but an everyday reality for the people; the contact line, on the other hand, is more a frozen frontline than a border. This is clearly illustrated by occasional shelling of the checkpoints and roadside mines. But what the two new "borders" have in common is the fact that they became established in violation of international law and are having a serious impact on the affected people as well as Ukrainian society as a whole. They separate Ukrainian citizens from each other, cut economic ties, encourage corruption and have the potential to spark new outbreaks of violent conflict at any time.

To summarise: two new "borders" have come into being in Eastern Europe since 2014, which effectively cut off pieces of Ukrainian territory. That said, the remainder of this article will not focus on the high-level questions of foreign policy or geopolitical matters that the violations of international law have raised. Instead, it will concentrate on describing the currently less well-known realities on the ground and how these affect people's everyday lives and on analysing the concrete repercussions of the new "border regimes". In a first step, the authors will explain – first for Crimea and then for the occupied territories – how the "border regimes" came about, what the situation at the crossing points looks like and how these are used. This will be followed by an examination of the consequences with respect to the freedom of movement, economic relations, corruption and the security situation.

From Administrative Boundary Line to De-Facto National Border

Unlike the situation in Eastern Ukraine, Crimea's new dividing line runs along the administrative boundary line between the Ukrainian Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the adjoining Kherson region. Before the Russian annexation, the administrative boundary line was comparable to the borders between the German federal states (*Bundesländer*); judging from its current attributes, it has since become a de-facto national border. After the referendum in Crimea held on 16 March 2014, which was not recognised by the international community, and the annexation by Russia two days later, Moscow declared the administrative boundary line an international border. Russian border troops under the control of the FSB, Russia's secret service, have been stationed along the line ever since. Roughly during the same period, the Ukrainian government increasingly lost control over parts of the Donbass. In response to the tense situation, the Ukrainian parliament Verkhovna Rada passed a law on the rights and freedoms of citizens in the temporarily occupied territories in mid-April 2014, which grants Ukrainian nationals free and unhindered entry on the basis of a valid passport.⁵

According to the OSCE, over 20,000 people, half of them Crimean Tatars, left Crimea within a year of the annexation.⁶ Others estimate the number of internally displaced persons from Crimea to be between 40,000 and 50,000. While it was initially relatively easy to slip into and out of Crimea unnoticed, now every traveller must cross at one of the three official crossing points. Fences have been erected along the administrative boundary line. Russian forces have also been accused of laying mines.⁷ Since the beginning of 2015, the Ukrainian side itself has enforced rules that apply to the regular Ukrainian national borders.⁸ Ukrainian border officials now check people and vehicles. Ukrainian customs agents perform checks to ensure that people adhere to the restrictions of what can be taken across, such as a 50 kilograms limit for food and personal belongings. Bread

and potatoes are allowed, confectionary is not. A personal laptop can be taken along, but pets cannot.⁹

Train and bus links to Crimea were discontinued completely by December 2014.¹⁰ A few days before the New Year, the unannounced suspension of public transport resulted in chaos at the administrative boundary line, with traffic jams kilometers long building up shortly before the festivities. There has been no direct public transport from and to Crimea since. Trains terminate in the city of Kherson over 100 kilometers from the administrative boundary line or in the small town of Novooleksiivka, almost 30 kilometers from the nearest crossing point. People then have to take a bus or taxi to the Ukrainian checkpoint. Between the Ukrainian and the Russian checkpoints there is a further two kilometers of "neutral zone" to cover. Officially, the three crossing points along the administrative boundary line can only be crossed on foot or in one's own vehicle. Unofficially, drivers transport travellers through the neutral zone for a fee. Those who can afford it pay for a minibus to take them all the way from Kiev to Sevastopol in Crimea. It is said that the border guards accept bribes to turn a blind eye. The official ban on public transport therefore affects mainly the elderly and the socially disadvantaged.

Public transport from and to Crimea was discontinued entirely at the end of 2014.

In June 2015, the rules were tightened further. Many parents with children found out the hard way directly at the Ukrainian checkpoints when they tried to travel from and into Crimea. Some were turned back because their child did not have a Ukrainian passport, or the border guards stopped them because one parent had stayed at home. What the parents did not know was this: they needed a notarised letter of authorisation from their partner. Such a simple-sounding requirement entails a great deal of effort and



Checkpoints along the contact line in Eastern Ukraine (as of November 2016). Sources: Own illustration based on UN OCHA 2016: Ukraine: Checkpoints – Humanitarian Snapshot, <https://goo.gl/G2p7Sf> [1 Mar 2017]; Natural Earth ©, <http://naturalearthdata.com> [1 Mar 2017].

expense for people living in occupied Crimea. This is because the notarisation must be obtained from a recognised notary resident in Ukrainian controlled territory. All happy new parents have a true bureaucratic Odyssey ahead of them; to obtain a Ukrainian birth certificate they need to take the new-born from Crimea to the neighbouring Kherson region. If they don't make this effort and endure the long waiting times involved, their child would not be able to apply for a Ukrainian passport later on.

Ukrainian border officials will not let anybody with a Russian passport issued in Crimea pass. To be able to travel to Kherson or Kiev, a Ukrainian passport is therefore essential. Russian passports from Crimea are not recognised internationally either. This means a Crimean resident could fly from Sevastopol to Moscow, but the international destinations to which they could

fly from there can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Only Afghanistan, Cuba, Kyrgyzstan and Nicaragua have recognised the annexation of Crimea as legitimate. This is another reason that, just within the first year from the annexation, there were over 40,000 occasions on which Crimean residents made use of the Ukrainian passport or other administrative services in the Kherson region or Kiev.¹¹

Crossing the Border in Disputed No-Man's-Land

While the new de-facto national border with Crimea reflects the original administrative boundary line, the contact line in Eastern Ukraine corresponds to the frontline. Shortly after the war broke out in 2014, the situation was chaotic. The trains were no longer running reliably and long queues built up for coaches.

Many private car owners gave lifts to people fleeing the area, either driving through the disorderly scenes at the checkpoints along the official escape corridors maintained by the Ukrainian army or surreptitiously via back roads.¹² Sometimes documents were checked; at other times, people were just waved through. Pro-Ukrainian activists feared checks by separatists. Anyone who had called the “wrong” number or had the “wrong” app on their mobile phone came immediately under suspicion. Even Twitter was considered a risky app to have.

The Ukrainian government became increasingly concerned about the uncontrolled movement of people to and from the occupied territories. In January 2015, the Ukrainian Secret Service, which coordinates the so-called Anti-Terrorist Operation of the Ukrainian army, issued a temporary order on the transportation of people and cargo in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.¹³ Now, the contact line can only be crossed at official checkpoints and permits are required. Initially, the new system caused long delays with queues stretching for kilometers. People were waiting overnight in freezing temperatures to be allowed to pass. OSCE observers complained that Ukrainian soldiers had turned back travellers even though they had valid permits.¹⁴

Crossing the contact line is arduous, yet border traffic has increased considerably of late.

These days, the system is working relatively well. Permits can be applied for electronically. There are currently four checkpoints along the contact line with the occupied Donetsk region and just one checkpoint with the Luhansk region, which is only open to pedestrians. Unlike the situation in Crimea, public transport to and from the occupied areas was not suspended until 2016.¹⁵ Freight transport had been allowed to a limited degree until March 2017, when an economic blockade on all trade was announced. Nevertheless, the number of people crossing the contact

line is rising continuously. While it was four million in 2015, the number of crossings doubled to over eight million in 2016.¹⁶

Crossing the contact line is arduous and time-consuming. People travelling to the occupied territories must leave the bus at the Ukrainian checkpoint to undergo the passport and customs checks. Then they must take a second bus that will pass through the no-man’s-land of the “grey zone” and across the zero line, on either side of which the conflicting parties frequently stand within eyeshot of each other, up to the separatists’ checkpoint. There, the travellers are once again asked to leave the bus to undergo checks by the separatists. Then they take a third bus to travel on to their destination. Once again, private vehicle owners offer their services to drive people conveniently and directly from Kiev to Donetsk, thereby circumventing the official ban on public or commercial passenger transportation to and from the occupied areas.

Anyone who wishes to cross the contact line must have a great deal of patience. Long queues are the norm, with average waiting time now amounting to three hours; in exceptional circumstances people wait over five hours. International aid agencies have set up toilets at the checkpoints as well as heated tents in winter. Around half the travellers undertake the arduous journey once a month, some of the younger ones every week,¹⁷ mainly to visit relatives, buy food or withdraw money. Pensioners must endure the long trip in order to receive their Ukrainian pension.¹⁸ They can only apply for and receive their pension in Ukrainian-controlled territory. The same applies to administrative matters. Roughly one in ten travellers crosses the contact line to make arrangements for a new passport or a birth certificate, because the documents issued in the occupied territories are only recognised by Russia.¹⁹ Only five per cent travel with the intention of leaving the occupied territories for good.





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Restricted Freedom of Movement

Freedom of movement is not only enshrined in the Ukrainian constitution as the right of every citizen, it is also a human right.²⁰ However, the checks and transitional provisions restrict citizens' freedom to move and travel freely within Ukraine. That said and in view of the situation in Crimea, even aid organisations confirm that the Ukrainian border regime is not a disproportionate response to the new situation.²¹ To ensure security within its territory, the Ukrainian government is entitled to conduct checks as long as these are appropriate and commensurate. The observers do, however, criticise the restrictions resulting from the suspension of the bus and train connections, long waiting times, complicated checking procedures and instances of inappropriate actions by Ukrainian officials.²²

On the Russian side of the border, Crimean Tatars, human rights activists and journalists in particular risk being detained or arrested without explanation. In March 2015, the father of a Crimean Tatar who had been arrested disappeared without a trace after crossing the border into Crimea.

The situation along the contact line is also difficult. Although the system of permits was introduced to facilitate control of the movement of people, the chaotic way it was first implemented resulted in massive restrictions of Ukrainian citizens' freedom of movement. Aid organisations also complain that the temporary order imposed by the Ukrainian secret service remains in force and that there is still no legal basis for the system of permits.²³

One positive aspect worth mentioning is that the Ukrainian border protection forces and local authorities are cooperating with NGOs and international organisations. There is, for instance, a mobile phone app from a Ukrainian foundation available for travellers to report problems they are experiencing at the checkpoints to the occupied territories, and this information is passed on to the responsible authorities. However, not all recommendations are implemented immediately. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, for example, is still urging for public transport to be once again permitted to cross the checkpoints.

Economic Blockade and Interrupted Coal Shipments

The economic links with Crimea and with the occupied areas are diminishing more and more. After Crimean Tatars had blocked the most important road links to Crimea in September 2015 and power lines to Crimea had been brought down by explosions in November of that year, people living on the peninsula suffered large-scale food shortages and weeks of power cuts. One of the Crimean Tatars' objectives had been to get the Ukrainian government to declare an official economic blockade against Crimea, which Kiev finally agreed to in January 2016. Since that time, Crimea has been isolated economically from the rest of Ukraine apart from some limited supplies of electricity.²⁴

Even after the economic blockade with Crimea came into effect, no similar policy was expected for the occupied territories. The delivery of coal from the occupied territories by cargo trains crossing the contact line illustrated the relative permeability of the line until March 2017. Ukrainian power plants are dependent on the special type of coal from the regions across the line; any shortfall has to be made up by imports from South Africa, which are very costly. In 2015, almost 16 million tons of coal were delivered from the occupied territories. Large companies, in the steel industry for instance, continued operating in the occupied territories and were allowed to bring their goods across the contact line as long as they continued paying taxes to Kiev.

But the Ukrainian government was increasingly coming under pressure from a coalition of opposition parties and volunteer battalions for allowing a “trade in blood” that benefits the de-facto authorities in the occupied territories.²⁵ Calls for a blockade were proliferating and activists, including fighters from Ukrainian volunteer battalions, disrupted railway links in January 2017. Shortly after, the separatists began nationalizing the remaining Ukrainian companies in the occupied territories. Following protests and a public outcry against the government's attempts to dissolve the volunteers' blockades, surprisingly to many observers Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko on 15 March 2017 officially announced a temporary trade embargo against the occupied territories. The embargo prohibits all trade except humanitarian aid with the occupied territories until the separatists return nationalized enterprises under Ukrainian control and stop violating the ceasefire of the Minsk agreement.

New Sources of Corruption

The poorly regulated economic and trading relations with the occupied territories encouraged corruption on a large scale. The trade in coal from the occupied territories had spawned a number of corrupt practices. Some parliamentarians are thought to have benefited handsomely from allowing coal from the occupied territories to be relabelled as South-African coal, with the energy produced being sold to consumers at high profits. Some imports from Russia were also channelled through the occupied territories and found their way into Ukraine along dubious routes across the contact line.²⁶

Corruption is rife at the new “borders”.

But there is also wide-spread low-level corruption. There have been reports about bribes being paid to border officials at the checkpoints to both the occupied territories and Crimea.



Even the Archbishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church in Crimea was asked to pay the equivalent of ten euros in March 2015, which resulted in criminal proceedings being opened against the official involved. Allegedly, it takes large bribes for soldiers to be deployed at one of the checkpoints to the occupied territories. It is said that this “investment” pays off thanks to bribes offered to those manning the checkpoints for faster processing or for allowing goods through. The status quo thus benefits small groups of people on both sides as the new border regimes have opened up new illegal sources of revenue.

Escalation Possible at Any Time

While no actual fighting took place along the administrative boundary line with the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, unlike the situation in Eastern Ukraine, that does not mean that tensions cannot escalate at any time. On 7 August 2016, without warning, Russian border troops closed all crossing points to Crimea, the Russian military concentrated units along the border and advanced into the neutral zone in some places. Kiev responded by putting its troops on alert. Three days later, the Russian secret service



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Source: © Taras Ibragimov, QirimInfo.

tried to justify the action by alleging that there had been an attempt to mount a terror attack in Crimea. This incident shows how easily provocations along the de-facto border can escalate.

The conflict in Eastern Ukraine remains unresolved. It has cost almost 10,000 lives since April 2014. The frontline has hardly moved at all since the battles for Donetsk Airport and the transport hub of Debaltseve in February 2015. According to Ukrainian estimates, the

69,000 soldiers of the Ukrainian army along the 500-kilometer front face some 30,000 separatists and 5,500 Russian soldiers on the other side.²⁷ OSCE observers say openly that the conflicting parties are capable of controlling the intensity of the conflict. After the most heated clashes for a year in August 2016, the ceasefire violations briefly all but stopped after new negotiations. But the bloody battles for the towns of Avdiivka and Makiivka and in the vicinity of Donetsk at the end of January 2017 once again



illustrated that the situation can escalate again at any time. The OSCE recorded an unprecedented number of ceasefire violations.²⁸ Even though the checkpoints to the occupied territories increasingly resemble those of a national border, Ukrainian soldiers and separatists are facing one another directly at the front and the conflict keeps flaring up in some places.

Long Road to Reintegration

Over the last several months, there have been repeated calls for the government to bring about a resolution to the conflict in Eastern Ukraine. However, there are no indications that the government is formulating any medium or long-term strategies with regards to Crimea or the occupied part of the Donbass, although a government department dedicated to the occupied territories was set up in 2016.

As Russia categorically rules out any negotiations on Crimea, such as a “Geneva plus” format including the U.S. and EU, the question of how to restore Ukrainian territorial integrity with regards to Crimea continues to be unaddressed and its return remains a distant prospect. One of the recommendations has been to initially leave Crimea out of the picture and not conflate it with the Donbass. However, such proposals have been impossible to implement for political reasons, as the ultimate aim, namely the restoration of the territorial integrity of all of Ukraine, is fundamentally not up for debate and is also what the great majority of Ukrainians want to see. The more far-reaching demand for “painful compromises”, whereby “Crimea should not become a hindrance to an agreement to end the war in the East”, as recently put forward by Ukrainian oligarch Viktor Pinchuk in the Wall Street Journal, is not helpful and has elicited vehement criticism.²⁹

At the same time, various scenarios for the occupied territories have been floated in the public discussion. An expert study on Eastern Ukraine from autumn 2016 outlined four scenarios ranging from “complete isolation”, to “limited isolation” and “partial normalization”, to

a “limited re-integration”.³⁰ The idea of completely isolating and “sealing in” the occupied territories was already voiced in 2014.³¹ Former Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk advocated for complete isolation and the building of a wall as early as September 2014. But experts warn against such a course of action as it would cut the last remaining links between Ukrainian citizens on each side of the contact line. On the other end of the spectrum, “limited reintegration” seems not a viable option for the government in Kiev. Restoring economic and social relations with the occupied territories would only be possible with concessions to the de-facto authorities and Russia, which would hardly be acceptable to Ukrainian politicians and the general public.

In early 2017 it still seemed as if Kiev largely followed expert guidance to move towards a “partial normalisation” by way of practical step-by-step measures.³² A Cabinet of Ministers Action Plan published in January 2017 has set the first milestones for a reintegration of the occupied territories.³³ A separate action plan is being drafted for Crimea. According to the action plan, the reintegration of the territories in the Donbass are not meant to involve military action to reconquer the region. Instead, the government intends to rely on concrete steps in the areas of education, culture and business. Students from the occupied territories, for instance, are to be given free access to university courses throughout Ukraine. There are also plans to improve the facilities and accessibility at the crossing points along the contact line and to fight corruption. People from the occupied territories are also to be allowed access to medical facilities on the other side of the line. Such an approach could bring the populations living in the separatist areas closer to Ukraine.³⁴

However, the Ukrainian government’s policy towards the occupied territories most recently took a turn towards “limited isolation”. The newly adopted trade blockade calls into question the ambitious action plan for reintegration. While the crossing points remain open to the people moving across the contact line,

the last economic ties were effectively cut as of 15 March 2017.³⁵ The blockade could lead to an energy crisis if coal imports and alternative power generation cannot substitute halted coal deliveries from occupied Donbass. In February 2017, the government announced a state of emergency in the national energy sector and asked citizens to save energy. The economic impact of the blockade should also not be underestimated: experts expect a contraction of GDP of up to 1.6 per cent.³⁶ Moreover, the occupied territories might even further amalgamate with Russia, as transportation of cargo is now only possible through the uncontrolled Russian-Ukrainian border.

But even if the Ukrainian government chooses to implement its action plan and to adopt step-by-step measures that benefit the Ukrainian citizens in the occupied territories, there are many obstacles ahead on the long road to reintegration. Among others, the issue of funding has yet to be settled. The costs of rebuilding the infrastructure are estimated to be at least 1.5 billion U.S. dollars.³⁷ Ultimately, any solution will require political will on all sides: on the Ukrainian, the separatists' and, of course, on the part of the Russians, without whom the conflict in Eastern Europe would not have arisen in the first place.

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The images in this article are part of a photo report by Taras Ibragimov on QirimInfo. They depict the everyday life along the new de-facto border between Ukraine and annexed Crimea. The entire photo report is online at: <http://krymsos.com/en/news/v-ocheredi-k-moryu-fotoreportazh>.

- 1 Cf. Article 3 of CSCE Final Act: "The participating States regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe [...]".
- 2 The OSCE Observer Mission at the Russian Checkpoints Gukovo and Donetsk has no mandate to monitor the entire border currently not under control of the Ukrainian government. However, the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission should be allowed access to other border sections, but particularly near Luhansk, its personnel is regularly prevented from going right up to the border.
- 3 International Crisis Group 2016: Russia and the Separatists in Eastern Ukraine, 5 Feb 2016, in: <http://bit.ly/2lCnXR4> [13 Feb 2017].
- 4 Foundation.101 2016: Crossing the Line of Contact in Eastern Ukraine August and September 2016, 15 Oct 2016, in: <https://foundation101.org/en/news/20161015> [13 Jan 2017].
- 5 Verkhovna Rada 2014: Law No.1207-VII (in Ukrainian), 15 Apr 2014, in: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1207-18> [13 Feb 2017].
- 6 OSCE 2015: Freedom of movement across the administrative boundary line with Crimea, 19 Jun 2015, p. 3, in: <http://osce.org/ukraine-smm/165691> [13 Feb 2017].
- 7 Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor 2014: Ukraine Country Profile, 30 Nov 2014, in: http://archives.the-monitor.org/custom/index.php/region_profiles/print_profile/1015 [11 Jan 2017].
- 8 Ukrainian Cabinet of Ministers 2015: Resolution No. 38-2015-P on specific questions regarding the strengthening of Ukraine's national security (in Ukrainian), 30 Jan 2015, in: <http://bit.ly/2lzOrAT> [13 Feb 2017].
- 9 CrimeaSOS 2016: What are people allowed to take across the administrative boundary line? (in Russian), 16 Mar 2016, in: <http://bit.ly/2IHBBaw> [13 Feb 2017].
- 10 CrimeaSOS 2014: Ukrainian Railways discontinues passenger trains to Crimea (in Ukrainian), 26 Dec 2014, in: <http://bit.ly/2koY3eU> [13 Feb 2017].
- 11 OSCE 2015, n. 6, p. 4.
- 12 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) 2014: Ukraine: Immer mehr Menschen auf der Flucht, 2 Sep 2014, in: <http://bit.ly/2l83SBA> [13 Feb 2017].
- 13 Security Service of Ukraine 2015: Temporary Order on Control of the Movement of People, Transport Vehicles and Cargo along the Contact Line in Donetsk and Luhansk Regions (in Ukrainian), 22 Jan 2015 (in the currently valid version dated 12 Jun 2015), in: <https://ssu.gov.ua/ua/pages/32> [13 Feb 2017].
- 14 OSCE 2015: Protection of Civilians and their Freedom of Movement in the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions, 13 May 2015, in: <http://osce.org/ukraine-smm/156791> [13 Feb 2017].
- 15 UNHCR 2016: Ukraine. Freedom of Movement, Nov 2016, in: <http://goo.gl/hX88yu> [13 Feb 2017].

- 16 In 2015, only two checkpoints were generally open at any one time. Cf. Foundation.101 2016: Four Million People Crossed the Contact Line in 2015, 9 Feb 2016, in: <https://foundation101.org/en/news/20160209> [13 Feb 2017]; Foundation.101 2017: 8 Million People Crossed the Contact Line in 2016, 2 Feb 2017, in: <https://foundation101.org/en/news/20170202> [13 Feb 2017].
- 17 Foundation.101 2016, n. 4.
- 18 As some pensioners also receive pensions from the self-proclaimed “people’s republics”, the Ukrainian government has begun to check the lists for recipients who are registered as internally displaced persons, but live in the occupied territories. While restricting the practice would benefit the Ukrainian pension funds, it could cut one of the last remaining links with the Ukrainian citizens in the occupied territories.
- 19 Since 18 February 2017 Russia has officially recognised documents issued by the de-facto authorities in the occupied territories. Germany, France and the U.S. heavily criticized this recognition.
- 20 Cf. Article 33 of the Ukrainian Constitution and Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.
- 21 CrimeaSOS 2015: CrimeaSOS analysed the regime at the administrative boundary line with Crimea from the perspective of international law (in Ukrainian), 20 Jul 2015, in: <http://goo.gl/EWYQaL> [13 Feb 2017].
- 22 There have, for example, been reports of instances where Ukrainian border officials purposefully searched travellers for Russian passports issued in Crimea and then went on to destroy them. Without a Russian passport, people living in Crimea have no access to social security benefits or healthcare services. Cf. OSCE 2015, n. 6, p. 7.
- 23 DonbasSOS 2015: Minor changes to the temporary order (in Ukrainian), 25 Nov 2016, in: http://donbassos.org/25112026_vp_sbu [11 Jan 2017].
- 24 Wesolowsky, Tony 2016: Tatar Leader Vows Crimea Blockade Will Continue, RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty, 19 Jan 2016, in: <http://goo.gl/wBsFu7> [13 Feb 2017].
- 25 RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty 2017: Ukraine Announces Suspension Of Cargo Traffic With Separatist-Held Areas, 15 Mar 2017, in: <http://bit.ly/2p5HUO1> [30 Mar 2017].
- 26 Litra, Leonid et al. 2016: Not So Quiet on the Eastern Front: An Audit of the Minsk Agreements and Ukraine’s Reintegration Options, 18 Oct 2016, p. 15, in: <http://bit.ly/2kp5SkE> [13 Feb 2017].
- 27 Ukrainian Pravda 2016: Poltorak: 5.5 thousand Russian soldiers fight in the Donbass (in Ukrainian), 2 Dec 2016, in: <https://goo.gl/noAHBB> [11 Jan 2017].
- 28 Hug, Alexander 2017: Declaration by the Deputy Head of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine at a press conference, 3 Feb 2017, in: <https://t.co/5bgOiVD18G> [13 Feb 2017].
- 29 Pinchuk, Victor 2016: Ukraine Must Make Painful Compromises for Peace With Russia, The Wall Street Journal, 29 Dec 2016, in: <http://goo.gl/dWFaVc> [13 Feb 2017].
- 30 Litra et al., n. 26, pp. 26-28.
- 31 International Crisis Group 2016: Ukraine: The Line, 16 Jul 2016, in: <https://goo.gl/9sRn4S> [13 Feb 2017].
- 32 Litra et al., n. 26, p. 28.
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