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KyivPost

vol. 19, issue 29

INDEPENDENCE. COMMUNITY. TRUST

www.kyivpost.com

July 18, 2014

Russian Involvement Suspected In Crash Killing 295

BY KYIV POST

A Malaysia Airlines passenger jet crashed and burned in eastern Ukraine on July 17 after being shot down by a missile in what President Petro Poroshenko called a terrorist act. All 295 people on board, including 280 passengers and 15 crew members, are presumed dead.

Security Services of Ukraine chief

Valentyn Nalivaichenko, at a late night news conference, said the government is making all evidence in the investigation public, including intercepted phone calls between two members of the Russian military special services unit – known as the GRU – in which they discussed shooting down the airplane.

However, Russian President Vladimir Putin denied any involve-

ment, saying Ukraine is responsible.

However, Ukrainian officials say the Kremlin-backed separatists evidently mistook the commercial aircraft for a Ukrainian military one in an area of fighting between the government and Russian-supported forces.

In the conversation, Nalivaichenko says that one Russian officer "who is a terrorist bastard" calls another, identified as Russian Col. Vasily Geranin, to

report that subordinates who arrived on the crash scene discovered that it was a civilian airliner downed with lots of casualties. Other news reports from the scene in a field in Donetsk Oblast, near the city of Torez, suggest that Kremlin-backed separatists have seized the airline's flight recorder,

crucial to any investigation, and are taking it to Moscow.

Nalivaichenko said "our first task is to investigate who among the Russian commanders gave the order to shoot down the plane."

The commercial Boeing 777 airlines was flying at an alti- →5

Ukraine: Phone conversations show Kremlin-backed fighter telling Russian military intelligence officer: "We have just shot down a plane." See page 5 for transcript.

US prods EU to take tougher line against Russia

BY KYIV POST

America broke ranks with the European Union on July 16 and announced heightened, unilateral sanctions against Russia over its support of separatists in eastern Ukraine, targeting some companies in the country's energy, financial and defense industries. But the new measures fell short of the long-threatened sanctions that would target these three key sectors of the Russian economy in a comprehensive way. →3

Russia's President Vladimir Putin speaks with journalists in Brazil early on July 17, while U.S. President Barack Obama announced strengthened sanctions against Moscow on July 16. (AFP)

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Відповідальний за випуск Якуб Парусинський
Адреса видавця та засновника співпадають: Україна, м. Київ, 01004, вул. Пушкінська, 31А, 6-й поверх.
Реєстраційне свідоцтво Кв № 15261-3833ПР від 19.06.09.
Передплатний індекс ДП Преса 40528
Надруковано ТОВ «Новий друк», 02660, Київ, вулиця Магнітогорська, 1, тел.: 559-9147
Замовлення № 13-8040
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Mailing address:

Kyiv Post,
31A Pushkinska, Suite 600, 6th floor
Kyiv, Ukraine, 01004

Advertising

tel. +380 44 591-7788
fax +380 44 591-3345
advertising@kyivpost.com

Editorial staff

tel. +380 44 591-3344
fax +380 44 591-3345
news@kyivpost.com

Subscriptions & Distribution

tel. +380 44 591-7788
fax +380 44 591-3345
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Employment Advertising

tel. +380 44 591-3408
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vasilko@kyivpost.com

Hundreds hope for prisoner swaps as backdoor negotiations drag on

BY KATYA GORCHINSKAYA

KATYA.GORCHINSKAYA@GMAIL.COM

Despite the Ukrainian government's claim of having no contact with Kremlin-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, officials have for months engaged in negotiations to swap prisoners.

Although secret groups in the Security Service of Ukraine and other agencies work on the issue, much of the work is being done by a couple of independent negotiators who are former senior military or police officials who have only a loose connection with Kyiv.

As of July 17, there are more than 40 Ukrainian soldiers held as prisoners of war by Moscow-backed separatists, according to Andriy Lysenko, spokesperson for the National Security and Defense Council.

But the true number of people held in captivity is in the hundreds, and changes all the time, according to Nikolai Yakubovich, a negotiator who had also been imprisoned in Donetsk Oblast's Horlivka in May.

"In Luhansk it's in the order of 150, and in Donetsk and Horlivka there are also more than 100, probably close to 120. There are at least 20 people in Horlivka, there are civic activists that the militants have started grabbing," Yakubovich explains.

But the Ukrainian government has also been capturing militants in the east, and their number in detention is more than 200, according to Yakubovich, who is an unofficial adviser to the National Security and Defense Council Secretary, serving as a link between prisoners in the east and the government.

"SIZOs (pre-trial detention centers) are filled not just in the east, but in Kyiv also," says one senior security official who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk about the subject with the media.

But prisoner swaps take place slowly. Natali Budik has been fighting for the release of her husband, Vasili Budik, from prison since May 2. Her husband was taken off the street as he walked home in Horlivka. Several separatists



Natalya Budik stands in front of the Security Service of Ukraine in Kyiv, where she came to petition the agency to help release her husband from prison. He has been held by Kremlin-backed separatists in Donetsk Oblast since May 2. (Pavlo Podufalov)

approached and held a gun to his head and took him away. Natalya Budik says she has no idea why Vasili was taken. A citizen of Georgia and owner of a web design studio, she says the only crime he committed was being "too pro-Ukrainian on his Facebook page."

Vasili is being held with more than a dozen other people, most of whom are Ukrainian servicemen.

The highest ranking among them is Oleksandr Vasiushchenko, a colonel of Ukraine's Security Service and head of the Artemivsk office. After weeks of negotiations, a deal was struck to free the group of prisoners. But Natalya Budik claims the president's office blocked the exchange brokered by an independent negotiator.

Budik, along with mothers of five other soldiers held captive, picketed Bankova Street for five days demanding that an exchange be approved. She has also been petitioning other Ukrainian government agencies. For example, one of her three petitions to the SBU was filed on July 9, and she said she was promised a written answer on Aug. 7 or 8.

"They don't give a damn about our guys – this is my dominating feeling in the past two months... that POWs are thrown in jail and are forgotten about," she said. "I am writing petitions – what else can I do?"

Reportedly, Horlivka separatist leader Igor Bezler was prepared to exchange 15 prisoners for Olga Kulygina, held by the Ukrainian side. Originally, she was rumored to be Bezler's lover, but the SBU allegedly found evidence that she is one of the ideologists who designed the takeover of southeastern Ukraine.

But Ukrainian officials say there is a reason why that particular exchange has not taken place.

Yakubovich says "she is a staff agent of the FSB (Russian Federal Security Service). One government official said that the Ukrainian SBU captured memory sticks that support their suspicions. He spoke on the condition of anonymity because he is not entitled to comment about prisoner exchanges. "So, if she is exchanged, it will be at a minimum for Nadiya Savchenko, to show that the Russians are in the middle of

it. Ukrainian pilot Savchenko was detained by Kremlin-backed insurgents in Luhansk on June 17, and illegally transported to the Russian Federation on June 24, according to Ukraine's Foreign Ministry. She was held in a hotel in Voronezh until June 30, and then detained by the Russian Federation and accused of illegally crossing the border.

Savchenko had her first meeting with a Ukrainian consul on July 17. She told the consul that she was taken across the border via a separatist-controlled border checkpoint, handcuffed and transported with a sack on her head.

Ukraine's authorities suspect that the Russian Federation has more Ukrainian soldiers in jail, taken out of the country in the same manner, but so far have no proof.

Some prisoners of war have not survived. On July 15, Lysenko, the National Security and Defense Council spokesman, said that two pilots from the AN-26 cargo plane that had been presumably shot down by a Russian air-to-air missile on July 14 were held by separatists. Just two days later, he said that they were dead and the government had trouble reclaiming their bodies because they're in the part of Luhansk Oblast controlled by the separatists.

Volodymyr Ruban, another negotiator, told Zerkalo Nedeli last week that separatists only capture civilians and soldiers, and shoot anyone who is a member of the National Guard or volunteer battalions.

But Yakubovich says "there have been several cases when guardsmen were taken prisoners, but then they were either freed or exchanged. What I know is that there have been cases when injured men were finished off."

He says that his own experience in a separatist prison showed that it was very dangerous. Some prisoners are "kept in beastly conditions" with no medical assistance available. Their lives are in danger because many of their captors have no idea how to handle weapons, and accidents with weapons can happen easily.

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Russia scoffs at sanctions, takes no steps to end war

→1 Specifically, the new sanctions hit two major energy firms, including the giant Rosneft. They also named eight weapons firms, including Kalashnikov, two powerful financial institutions and five more individuals, including the head of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, a Russian citizen.

The moves are expected to hurt Russia's \$1.8 trillion economy, but no analysts could be found who predicted that the new steps alone would be enough to get Russian President Vladimir Putin to back off his war against Ukraine.

The moves by the U.S. did, however, put pressure on the European Union to introduce a fresh round of sanctions of its own and exposed a rift between America and the 28-member bloc over how strongly to punish Russia for annexing Crimea and instigating violence in the east. EU leaders said on July 16 that their sanctions would come later this month, but many expect the Europeans to go softer on the Kremlin.

Ukrainian reaction

Speaking with the Kyiv Post on July 17, a Ukrainian presidential administration official expressed his mixed feelings about the sanctions: "Something is better than nothing." Moreover, the official added, Kyiv is not likely to receive more help from the West this summer, leaving Ukraine in the lurch.

"Tomorrow will begin U.S. and EU vacations for summer, so Ukraine will face Russia alone," the official said. The next summit of EU leaders is expected on Aug. 30.

Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk was a bit more optimistic. "It's time to pay for violation of international law, for military aggression, constant supply of weapons by Russia to Ukraine's territory, financing of bandits that kill the peaceful population and try to destroy Ukraine. And Russia will pay for the war it started against Ukraine," Yatseniuk said.

Russian reaction

The new sanctions irked Russian officials, who denounced them as the country's stock market dipped slightly. On July 17, Putin predicted that sanctions would have a "boomerang effect" on the U.S.

"Without any doubt, they will push U.S.-Russian relations to a dead end and cause very serious damage," Putin said.

Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev, at a government meeting on July 17, said that "all these sanctions, alas, will not help Ukraine in any way."



German Chancellor Angela Merkel (R) and Russian President Vladimir Putin chat during the second half of the 2014 FIFA World Cup final football match between Germany and Argentina at the Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro on July 13. (AFP)

Rosneft chief Igor Sechin called the sanctions "baseless, subjective and illegal."

Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called them "a primitive attempt to retaliate because events in Ukraine unroll not according to the Washington scenario. "We have no intention to tolerate blackmail, we reserve the right for retaliatory measures," according to a statement.

Military industry targeted

Washington's stepped-up sanctions deliberately target Russia's military-industrial complex, with the implicit aim of constraining its ability to further destabilize eastern Ukraine. They include freezing the U.S.-based assets of eight Russian state-owned defense companies and forbid American individuals or firms from conducting business with them.

Among them are Kalashnikov Concern, which makes the famous Kalashnikov assault rifles, and Bazalt, a Moscow-based arms producer and manufacturer of the rocket-propelled

grenade launchers that separatists have used on several occasions against Ukrainian army aircraft.

Also included on the list are Uralvagonzavod, the world's largest battle tank manufacturer, and Sozvezdie, Russia's leading developer of electronic warfare and radio communications systems.

Lack of a parallel arms embargo by the EU paves the way for France to complete its planned sale of two Mistral-class helicopter carriers to Russia worth \$1.6 billion. The country remains defiant in pursuing its deal with Russia, receiving a contingent of Russian troops last month for training on the warships.

Latvia and Iceland have called for France to abandon the deal in light of latest reports of Russian involvement in Ukraine and stressed its incompatibility with the newly-introduced sanctions regime.

Lithuanian President Dalia Grybauskaitė said on arrival at the July 16 summit that the EU was "still far away" from an arms or technology embargo, Reuters reported.

Expanded sanctions against Russia come amid growing evidence of its direct military involvement in the armed conflict, with videos appearing to show rockets being fired into Ukraine from Russian territory surfacing on the day of the U.S. announcement.

The U.S. Defense Department furthermore claims thousands of Russian troops have massed along the Russo-Ukrainian border, a charge Moscow denies.

"We believe there are now between 10,000 and 12,000 Russian troops on the border... I can't speak for what they intend to do. Certainly, it is intimidating," Pentagon spokesman Army Col. Steve Warren said on July 16.

Russian businesses hit

In addition to 10 companies whose American assets it blocked and black-listed for doing business with in March and April, 12 Russian companies were penalized in the energy, defense, finance and transport sectors.

Rosneft, Russia's largest oil and gas company, and two privately-held energy firms were banned from new borrowings in the U.S. beyond a 90-day period. Identical sanctions apply to state development bank Vneshecombank, and Gazprombank, the country's third largest bank.

That will raise borrowing costs and effectively cut off medium- and long-term U.S. financing, according to Bloomberg. They don't otherwise prohibit U.S. companies or individuals from doing business with these Russian firms, however.

"This represents a seismic hit to Russia, and to Russian markets," wrote Timothy Ash, senior analyst of emerging markets for Standard Bank in London. "The fact that such prominent companies as VEB, Gazprombank, Novatek and Rosneft are being sanctioned suggests that the U.S. administration is deadly serious about sending a clear message to Moscow not to mess

with Ukraine and to stop intervening directly in Ukraine."

Meanwhile, the European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development were asked to suspend any new financing projects in Russia, following a July 16 summit of EU leaders in Brussels.

EU leaders also agreed to go after Russian companies and oligarchs deemed to be helping the Kremlin wage its covert war on Ukraine, reported the EU Observer. Their "first list" of entities will be prepared "by the end of July," added the online newspaper.

News of the sanctions sent Rosneft's stock price down by 3.2 percent, while Micex, Russia's largest trading platform retreated 2.9 percent, the fourth straight day of declines. The ruble also weakened 1.5 percent versus the U.S. dollar, its biggest drop in four months.

An EU diplomat told the EU Observer that the European Commission will furthermore suspend the vast majority of grants for Russia earmarked for 2014-2020.

Although the latest EU sanctions are expected to be lighter and not target whole sectors or industries of the Russian economy, Ash said "it does not really matter what the EU itself does, but the fact that these Russian companies are being sanctioned by the U.S. will force European companies with business interests in the U.S. to comply — every Western business is ultimately forced to comply with the Securities and Exchange Commission, Office of Foreign Assets Control and U.S. Treasury."

But no change in Russian behavior is expected immediately.

"The impact might prove more potent going forward, especially as the U.S. signaled by its latest move it is prepared to ratchet up the pressure on Russia and continue with 'sectoral' restrictions," said a Dragon Capital note to investors.

Ratcheting up Sanctions: March 17-July 16, 2014

European Union	U.S.
European Investment Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development: no new financing projects in Russia	2 Russian banks banned from raising new equity or debt in the U.S.
72 individuals issued travel bans and asset freezes (additional individuals to be published by August)	31 Individuals are financially blocked in the U.S., including their assets, and American firms and individuals are prohibited from doing business with them
2 Companies slapped with asset freezes and forbidden from doing business with EU companies (additional entities to be published by August)	30 Companies including 8 Russian military and defense firms, and 2 Russian banks prohibited with from doing business with U.S. individuals or firms and U.S.-based assets blocked
	3 Russian energy firms banned from raising new equity or debt in the U.S.

Source: U.S. Treasury Department, European Commission

Editorials

Terror strikes

The July 17 crash of a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 passenger plane, presumably killing 295 passengers on board as it flew over territory controlled by Kremlin-backed separatists in Ukraine's Donetsk Oblast, should be a wake-up call for the West.

While an investigation is under way, all indications -- including intercepted phone calls by Ukrainian special services showing two Russian military agents talking about the crash -- suggest that the separatists thought they were shooting down a Ukrainian military transport plane, like they did on June 14, killing 49 soldiers and crew. Besides that incident, two other military planes have been shot down in the last week in Ukraine's east.

The plane shot down on July 17 was filled with civilians, people of many different nations, including children. Many were probably flying on vacation from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur.

The Ukrainian government hasn't had control of that area near the Russian border, for a few months, so it appears unlikely that this incident involved the Ukrainian military.

One Russian-backed separatist leader, Igor Girkin, confirmed that his side shot down the plane after apparently mistaking it for a military cargo transport aircraft. Another denied it any involvement.

But President Petro Poroshenko called it a terrorist act and the interior minister said that the plane was brought down by a missile. We find that version of events more credible.

If there's any good to come out of this loss of life, which in a single incident exceeded the number of Ukrainian soldiers killed in the last three months, it's that the West comes to its senses and starts punishing Russia for its lawlessness. Those who think that Russian President Vladimir Putin is simply Ukraine's problem are mistaken. He is a threat to world peace. He is the type of person who would launch such a cowardly attack, or such an irresponsible person that he would arm mercenaries who would carry it out.

This plane crash obviously should be thoroughly investigated, but the imposition of more sanctions against Russia should not wait. The West should rally the world around crushing Russia's economy with crippling economic sanctions, especially against the energy, military and finance sectors that sustain Putin's war machine. These sanctions should have been applied the minute that Russia invaded Crimea on Feb. 27. They might have saved the lives of nearly 300 Ukrainian soldiers killed, a comparable number of civilians and now a likewise number of innocent passengers. Stopping Russia will stop the killings.

Stopping Russia

While it was welcome news that the U.S. on July 16 decided to break ranks with the vacillating European Union to impose tougher sanctions against Russia, more is needed to stop Vladimir Putin's war. The new actions -- targeting more Russian businesses including banks and energy firms -- are too little but, we hope, not too late.

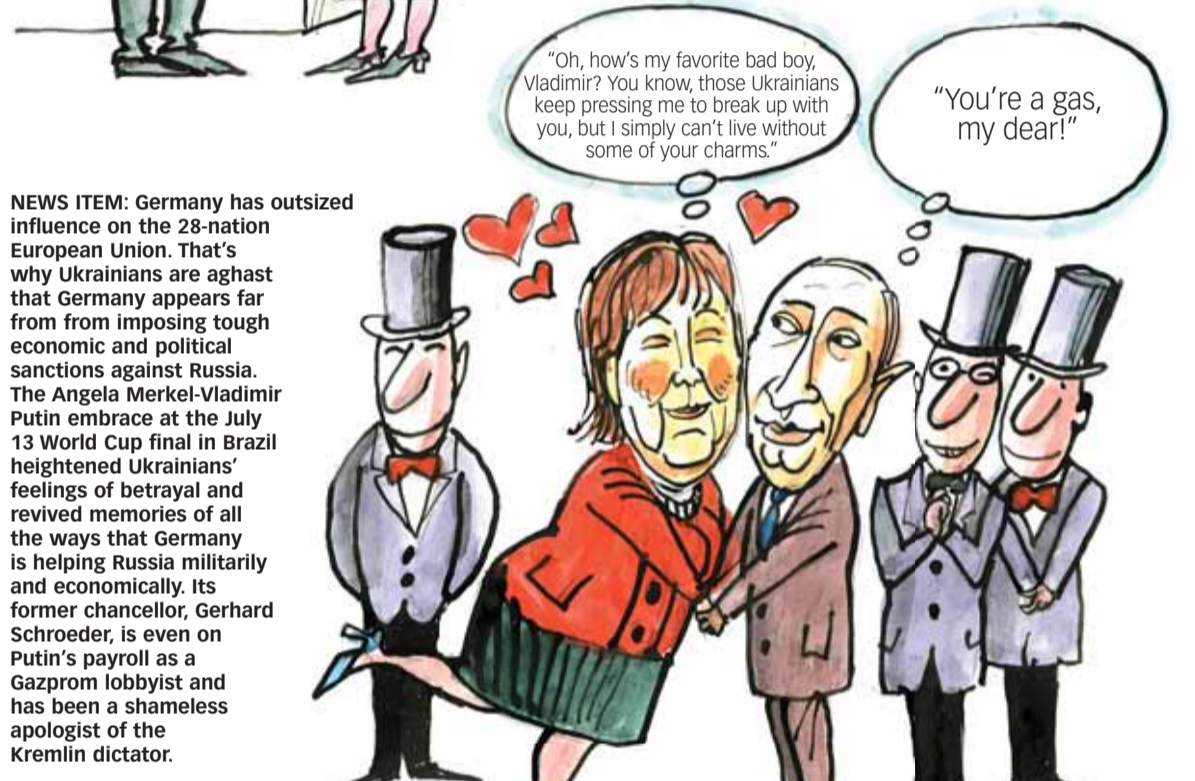
U.S. President Barack Obama is slowly ratcheting up the pressure on Moscow. But these measures -- and more -- should have come after Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 27 and seized the Crimean peninsula.

One can only hope that EU nations such as France and Germany will rue their immoral actions in arming and training Russian soldiers. We think Berlin's representative in Kyiv, Christoph Weil, and Paris' representative, Alain Remy, should be ashamed of their nations' support for Russia's military-industrial complex -- France, most egregiously, through the coming sale of two Mistral warships worth \$1.6 billion. With such powerful nations engaging in such unprincipled actions, is it any wonder that lesser EU powers are actively working to undermine sanctions against Russia? Great Britain, the third EU giant along with France and Germany, should not be let off the hook either. London serves as a banker-valet for Moscow's criminal state. The only EU nations taking strong stands are, unfortunately, the ones without much clout:

The EU's inaction exposes grave flaws in European security. Requiring unanimity of 28 EU nations undermines democracies' arguments that their societies are better than others. It's more like a prescription for gridlock. The stronger and more moral EU nations should follow in America's footsteps and break ranks with the Moscow apologists to shun trade and ties with Putin's Russia, at least in the military sector.

On the world stage, the United Nations will continue to be a toothless organization as long as aggressors like Russia hold a Security Council veto. Even though an overwhelming majority of nations condemned Russia's annexation of Crimea, the world could not back up its statement with action. And, sadly, as Putin's tour of South America showed leaders there could care less about Ukraine's sovereignty or how many Ukrainians are killed in Russia's war.

We encourage the United States and principled EU members to put the greater global need for security and peace, as well as the right of Ukrainians to determine their own destiny as a sovereign nation, ahead of private commercial interests with Russia. Only crushing and painful economic sanctions against Russia -- not small surgical ones -- will stop Putin's war machine.



KyivPost

Published by Public Media LLC

Jakub Parusinski, Chief Executive Officer
Brian Bonner, Chief Editor

Editors: Katya Gorchinskaya, Christopher J. Miller,
Mark Rachkevych, Olga Rudenko, Ivan Verstyuk

Staff Writers: Anastasia Forina, Olena Goncharova, Oksana Grytsenko,
Vlad Lavrov, Evan Ostryzniuk, Nataliya Trach, Daryna Shevchenko

Photo Editor: Pavlo Podufalov. Photographers: Kostyantyn Chernichkin, Anastasia Vlasova
Chief Designer: Vladyslav Zakharenko

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People stand next to the wreckage of the Malaysian airliner carrying 295 people from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur after it crashed, near the Donetsk Oblast city of Shaktarsk, in separatist-held eastern Ukraine on July 17. (AFP)

SBU: Russian hand seen in plane crash

→ **1** tude of 10 kilometers – or 33,000 feet – when, according to the Interior Ministry, the plane was brought down by a ground-to-air missile.

Russian-backed separatist commander Igor Girkin, also known as Strelkov, initially claimed credit for the downing of a military transport airplane. He revised his statement later.

“We did warn you – do not fly in our sky,” he wrote on VK.com, Russia’s version of Facebook.

Since the Ukrainian government doesn’t control the area where the plane crashed, heavy suspicion – especially in light of Nalivaichenko’s public release of intercepted conversations – falls on Russian military forces for carrying out the strike.

If proved, the murder of 295 civilians would almost surely bring a

much swifter and stronger reaction from the West, including the United States and European Union, whose leaders have been reluctant to impose tough sanctions on Russia’s key economic sectors of finance, military and energy.

The 295 people aboard the plane possibly included 23 Americans and nine British citizens as well as 15 crew members.

U.S. President Barack Obama said on July 17 that “we are working to determine whether there were American citizens on board. That is our first priority....The U.S. will offer any assistance we can to determine what happened and why...our thoughts and prayers are with all the families of the passengers, wherever they call home.”

The flight departed at 12:14 p.m.

from Amsterdam en route to Kuala Lumpur, and was reportedly shot down around 4:20 p.m.

Russian and Western journalists reported seeing mangled bodies and passports of American, Russian, Dutch and Malaysian citizens, among others, at the scorched crash site.

Poroshenko announced the government is launching an investigation into the incident, but called the event “a terrorist act.” He said Ukrainian forces had nothing to do with the plane crash. According to the anti-terrorist operation’s information center, Ukraine’s military aviation did not fly on July 17.

Malaysian President Mohd Najib Tun Razak tweeted: “I am shocked by reports that an MH plane crashed. We are launching an immediate investigation.”

The separatist leader Girkin initially

claimed credit in a tweet that was later removed.

“The plane has just been taken down somewhere around Torez (Donetsk Oblast). It lays there behind the Progress mine. We did warn you – do not fly in our sky. And here is the video proving another ‘bird’ falling down. The bird went down behind the slagheap, not in the residential district. So no peaceful people were injured.”

Girkin is a Moscow native who, according to the Security Service of Ukraine, is a high-ranking officer in Russia’s military intelligence department.

It appears that, despite their denials, the Russian-backed separatists had weapons capable of downing a commercial flight at least 10 kilometers or 33,000 feet high. On June 29, representatives of Donetsk People’s Republic boasted that they took over a Ukrainian military base that had Buk long-range missiles. The operational range of missiles fired by Buk is up to 25 kilometers, or 2.5 times the altitude at which the Malaysian plane flew.

Many airlines, including Air France, Aeroflot and British Airlines, said they will avoid Ukrainian airspace.

An Interfax report said the plane came down 50 kilometers (or 20 miles) short of entering Russian airspace. It “began to drop, afterwards it was found burning on the ground on Ukrainian territory,” the unnamed source said.

In a telephone interview with Channel 5, a Torez resident said that when the plane spiraled down after being hit, “it looked like a cargo transport plane, and only later did we realize it was a passenger plane.”

Ukraine’s government forces and Russia-backed separatists continue to fight for control of the heavily industrialized population centers of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, home to 15 percent of Ukraine near the Russian border.

Two Ukrainian military planes were shot down in the area in the past few days. Ukraine’s government accuses Russia of complicity.

SBU: Intercepts show Russian military had hand in crash

Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777-200 flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur was allegedly shot down by a group of Russian-backed militants near the village of Chornukhine, some 80 kilometers northwest of Donetsk, according to the recording of intercepted phone calls between members of terrorist groups, released by Ukraine’s security agency.

One phone call was made at 4:40 p.m. Kyiv time, or 20 minutes after the plane crash, by Igor Bezler, a military commander of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic. He reports to a person identified as Vasili Geranin, a colonel of the main intelligence department of the armed forces of Russian Federation. He called to report the plane was shot down and that fellow militants were going to the scene.

The second intercepted conversation released by the Security Service of Ukraine, or SBUM, was apparently made by militants nicknamed “Major” and “Greek” immediately upon inspection of the crash site.

“It’s 100 percent a passenger aircraft,” “Major” is recorded as saying, as he admitted to seeing no weapons on site. “Absolutely nothing. Civilian items, medicinal stuff, towels, toilet paper.”

In the third part of conversation, Cossack commander Nikolay Kozitsin, talking to an unidentified militant, suggests that the airplane could have been carrying spies. Here are transcripts:

Igor Bezler: We have just shot down a plane. Group Minera. It fell down beyond Yenakievo.

Vasili Geranin: Pilots. Where are the pilots?

IB: Gone to search for and photograph the plane. It’s smoking.

VG: How many minutes ago?

IB: About 30 minutes ago.

SBU comment: After examining the site of the plane, the terrorists come to the conclusion that they have shot down a civilian plane. The next conversation took place 40 minutes later.

“Major”: These are Chernukhin folks shot down the plane. From the Chernukhin check point. Those Cossacks who are based in Chernukhino.

“Greek”: Yes, Major.

“Major”: The plane fell apart in the air. In the area of Petropavlovskaya mine. The first “200” (code word for dead person). We have found the first “200”. A civilian.

“Greek”: Well, what do you have there?

“Major”: In short, it was 100 percent a passenger (civilian) aircraft.

“Greek”: Are many people there?

“Major”: Holy sh__t! The debris fell right into the yards (of homes).

“Greek”: What kind of aircraft?

“Major”: I haven’t ascertained this. I haven’t been to the main sight. I am only surveying the scene where the first bodies fell. There are the remains of internal brackets, seats and bodies.

“Greek”: Is there anything left of the weapon?

“Major”: Absolutely nothing. Civilian items, medicinal stuff, towels, toilet paper.

“Greek”: Are there documents?

“Major”: Yes, of one Indonesian student. From a university in Thompson.

Militant: Regarding the plane shot down in the area of Snizhne-Torez. It’s a civilian one. Fell down near Grabove. There are lots of corpses of women and children. The Cossacks are out there looking at all this.

They say on TV it’s AN-26 transport plane, but they say it’s written Malaysia Airlines on the plane. What was it doing on Ukraine’s territory?

Nikolay Kozitsin: That means they were carrying spies. They shouldn’t be f...cking flying. There is a war going on.



Relatives of people onboard Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 from Amsterdam react outside the family holding area at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang, Malaysia, on July 18. (AFP)

Siversk recovering after Russia 'gang' run out of city

BY OKSANA GRYSSENKO
GRYSSENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

SIVERSK, Ukraine — Tamara Yarontseva brought apples from her garden to thank the Ukrainian soldiers for freeing Siversk town, located on the border of Donetsk and Lugansk oblasts. She had spent nearly two weeks in a cellar hiding from crossfire shelling that destroyed her kitchen.

Despite all this, she was happy on July 10 to see Ukrainian soldiers who freed the 10,000-person city from hundreds of Kremlin-backed "gangster" who terrorized residents for two months. "It was scary to even go out to the garden," Yarontseva remembers.

→ **Locals in Donetsk Oblast city say they lived in fear for months**

Siversk played an important strategic role as a transit hub for weapons and fighters to Sloviansk and Lysychansk.

The Ukrainian army surrounded the city in armored vehicles and used cannons and aviation to defeat the well-trained Russian-backed insurgents that also included many Russians. The occupiers were called the Ghost Battalion, organized by Aleksey Mozgovoy, a separatist commander in Luhansk.

Interviews with townspeople and documents revealed details about life under separatist rule.

A pastoral life in Siversk wasn't shaken by political tension until early May, when dozens of armed and masked men came in there. The rebels created their headquarters in a local café and forced the town's deputies to vote for

holding of separatist referendum on May 11. After the referendum, the insurgents started construction of a checkpoint on the road to Yampil.

Yarontseva said most of Siversk's residents didn't take the newcomers seriously. Others supported them, hoping that Russian troops would annex the territory, just like Crimea.

In early July, a woman who fit the description of Olga Kulygina, a journalist who is suspected of being a Russian Federal Security Service agent, came to Siversk. She claimed to have powers from Kremlin-backed separatist Igor Girkin, who goes by the name of Igor Strelkin and who says he served as a Russian FSB (Federal Security Service) agent. "This woman was huge and scary and the rebels claimed that she acceded in ferocity most of them," an official in Siversk said, who asked anonymity out of fear of reprisals. In a photo shot by French photographer Pierre Crom in Sloviansk in early May, Kulygina was routinely handling a semi-automatic rifle when patrolling the city. (<http://www.pierrecrom.nl/#pic-41>). When Kulygina was arrested by Ukrainian forces, the insurgents said they were ready to free 15 people in exchange for her release.

In Siversk, the mysterious woman who may have been Kulygina forced the town's mayor to let the separatists into the city hall and made the owner of a local club establish a military hospital. She also appointed a local man to take charge. Then she left.

Soon the insurgents recruited locals and started terrorizing residents. They seized expensive cars and then extorted money from local businesspeople. They also forced residents of Siversk to dig ditches. They set a curfew from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., when locals avoided looking out the windows.

Left behind at the insurgent-held hospital was a list of families and the amounts of money taken from them.

The Ukrainian liberators found plenty of evidence of Russian involvement elsewhere. → **11**



Kazatin kaolin plant gets tour by French, local officials

Several officials toured the newly opened €6 million kaolin processing plant in Vinnytsia Oblast's Kazatin, owned by French business Soka. Vinnytsia Governor Anatoliy Oliynyk (front left), Soka's managing director Philippe Delaporte (front right) are trailed by French Ambassador Alain Remy (left rear) and lawmaker Mykola Karerynchuk (right rear). The plant, which employs 30 people, was completed in May. This is the first processing plant for kaolin, an essential ingredient in the manufacture of china and porcelain, in post-Soviet Ukraine. The French company has invested €8 million since entering Ukraine in 2000, including €2 million in kaolin operations in Mykolajiv Oblast's Pervomaik. (Courtesy)

Ride-share pioneer makes splash with entry into Ukrainian market

BY IANA KORETSKAYA
HOTPOINT@GMAIL.COM

Getting from place to place in Ukraine is now easier. By connecting drivers who have empty seats with passengers going to the same destination, BlaBlaCar, a Paris-based ride-sharing network, already has 250,000 registered members in its first three months of operation in Ukraine.

Experts told the Kyiv Post that the idea of low-cost travel over long distances, costing as little as Hr 120 and averaging nearly 300 kilometers, without the need to rent or own a car is catching on.

"It's twice cheaper than taking my own car or using public transportation," said Maria Tkachenko, a project coordinator for a German company who wants to use the car service. A round-trip train ticket to Odesa, for example, costs nearly Hr 600, whereas it costs Hr 150 with BlaBlaCar to drive there one-way. And it is much faster — nearly five hours instead of seven by train. "And I could have a rest because I'm not in the driver's seat," she added.

One of the most popular destinations is driving from Kyiv to Lviv, said Alexei Lazorenko, BlaBlaCar's head in Ukraine and Russia, noting that the trip usually costs Hr 150-180.

The company's entry into Ukraine also signals the advent of what economists call "collaborative consumption." Owners rent or share something they are not using for a price, such as a car, house, high-end camera or even bicycle using peer-to-peer services.

Meanwhile, technology has helped spur the popularity of such transactions by creating connections through mobile phone applications or websites.

Yet not everyone is keen on sharing a car with complete strangers. Some people simply don't trust such services because of the safety risk.

Although Iryna Tsarenko, a personal assistant at an international supplier of grain storage equipment, thinks ride-sharing has a promising future, she is worried about the safety of



Ride-sharing network BlaBlaCar allows members to travel long distances cheaply by having them share the costs, and by giving people access to cars without having to rent or own one. (Courtesy)

traveling with strangers. "To be honest you should be careful, human trafficking has not stopped, and this service is suitable for it," Tsarenko warns.

However, BlaBlaCar says that it checks and verifies user information. Another important aspect is an evaluation that allows passengers to rate their trips with drivers, much like users of the CouchSurfing service rate their hosts who opened up their homes for guest stays.

"All registered users have their own rating. The higher the rating...the easier to match a driver to a passenger and for a passenger to find a driver. Many self-community services work with the same principles such as Airbnb, GefTaxi, Uber," Lazorenko said.

Other popular destinations are from Kyiv to Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa, or from Donetsk to Kyiv. Abroad, Belarus and Poland remain popular and travel to Western Europe is increasing, he said.

Operating in 12 countries, BlaBlaCar on July 2 raised \$100 million from Index Ventures Fund to develop ser-

vices in Ukraine and Russia.

Its presence, as well as other car services like Lyft, Uber and Get Taxi, has caused a backlash from taxi and other transportation companies. The Spanish government warned members of Lyft that they face a fine of €600, drivers €6,000, and repeat offenders €18,000. The company also faces opposition from New York City's tax regulator. The New York Taxi and Limousine Commission warned potential Lyft drivers that they face the possibility of car confiscation and fines of up to \$2,000.

But in Ukraine, the situation is different. Andriy Antonjuk, chairman of the Ukrainian Taxi Association says: "We do not want our jobs stolen by illegal taxis or citizens. But the influence on the Ukrainian taxi market will be minimal. Nearly 85 percent of the taxi market across the country operates in the shadows; in Kyiv, it is almost 95 percent. The illegal annual turnover of the taxi business is nearly Hr 20 billion, in Kyiv it is Hr 2.5 billion."

Kyiv Post staff writer Iana Koretskaya can be reached at hotpoint@gmail.com.

→ On the move

PAID ANNOUNCEMENT



The partners at international law firm CMS Cameron McKenna are very pleased to announce that **OLGA VOROZHBYT** has joined our Kyiv office as a Partner effective July 1, 2014. As part of the CMS team she will continue to develop our litigation and compliance practice. Olga's experience as a leading practitioner in dispute resolution includes pre-trial negotiations, representation of clients at all levels in Ukrainian courts, as well as in arbitration proceedings both in Ukraine and abroad. Her expertise also includes settling corporate conflicts and advising clients on

problematic dismissals; she advises foreign and local clients on compliance-related matters including internal and external FCPA-driven investigations, as well the mitigation of violations in Ukraine of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and the UK Bribery Act.



The partners of CMS Cameron McKenna are pleased to announce that **OLGA BELYAKOVA** has been promoted to the position of Counsel at the international law firm's Kyiv office. Olga advises clients on M&A, corporate, competition and general commercial issues with a special focus on the technology, media and communication sector (TMC). With over ten years' experience in the TMC sector, Olga regularly advises multinational and local telecommunication, IT and other companies on regulatory issues, inter-operator relations, television related issues, acquisitions of telecom-

munication and technology companies, and the sale and purchase of telecom and technical facilities. Olga is a recommended lawyer in the Chambers Europe 2012-2014 edition in the field of competition law in Ukraine, which describes her as "knowledgeable, service-minded and extremely impressive."

As destruction costs rise, no end to fighting in sight

BY EVAN OSTRYZNIUK
OSTRYZNIUK@KYIVPOST.COM

Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine is becoming a tale of wreck and ruin, with heavy weapons and a scorched-earth policy of retreating Kremlin-backed militants.

Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk has set an initial price tag for reconstruction at Hr 8.1 billion, or \$700 million, but with more destruction almost daily in the war, the damages will grow higher and won't be able to be counted until the fighting stops.

When the Russian-backed insurgents fled Sloviansk on July 5, they left a town bereft of running water, electricity and telecommunications, in addition to dozens of damaged residential, government and commercial buildings. Heavy fighting in nearby Mykolayivka left one of the region's five thermo-electric power plants damaged. Rail lines have been wrecked, roads torn up and bridges blown up to hinder the Ukrainian army's pursuit.

And with insurgents still occupying a dozen cities and many more towns in densely populated and heavily industrialized areas in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, their forces are dug in for a long fight.

The state railway giant Ukrzaliznytsia reports that in the past three weeks alone, 22 explosions have taken place along rail lines in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, including seven destroyed bridges, causing Hr 230 million worth of damage.

The national road agency, Ukravtodor, is claiming Hr 0.5 billion worth of damage to dozens of kilometers of roads, bridges and a viaduct. Some of the damage was caused by heavy weapons used by the Ukrainian army.

On July 16, Infrastructure Minister Maksym Burbak announced a preliminary damage figure of Hr 1 billion in ruined roads, railways, bridges, and airports.

The longest of the destroyed bridges – 303 linear meters across the



No one is quite sure who will pay for the damage done to homes, since few Ukrainians have property insurance, but it will likely be a mixture of state and international donors coupled with charity groups and the corporate sector. (Anastasia Vlasova)

Donets River near Yampil – will cost an estimated Hr 75 million to replace, according to Ukravtodor.

The preliminary sums needed just to repair the housing stock of newly liberated Sloviansk, which had a pre-war population of 140,000, is Hr 1.5 billion, according to Mykola Chechetkin, deputy director of the Emergency Situations Ministry. And then there are expenses related to utilities, schools and government offices. Thirty-four apartment blocks were damaged, 11 seriously, Chechetkin reported.

The most densely populated territory has yet to be liberated. About four million of Donetsk and Luhansk

oblasts' 6.6 million residents are still living in the war zone.

The Ukrainian government sent in repair crews to restore essential services after the liberation of Sloviansk and other cities. So far, the government has spent Hr 0.5 billion to restore 60 percent of the local electricity grid, reported Energy and Coal Industry Minister Electricity Department deputy director Borys Sorkin on July 16.

Privately owned infrastructure, such as the relay towers of major telecom providers and some energy assets, are on their own. MTS-Ukraine, for example, estimates the cost of repairing damage to its network caused by the

fighting at Hr 2.5 million.

One of the most complicated rebuilding tasks concerns the energy sector. The Donbas region has more energy resources than anywhere else in the country, including more than 100 coal mines that produce 70 percent of the nation's coal, and five thermal energy stations, two of which remain in enemy hands. Power lines, transformers, transfer stations, boilers, a whole range of fixed assets need to be repaired or replaced.

Volodymyr Boyenko, legal support director of the electricity and heat generator Donbasenergo, says that the repair program for the Slovyansk ther-

mal energy system will cost Hr 400 million.

Ukraine's largest energy holding DTEK, owned by billionaire Rinat Akhmetov, announced on July 10 that the cost of restoring the company's electrical equipment and networks is Hr 35 million.

Donbasenergo reports that the coal mines in the war zone are only working at around half of capacity, making losses tremendous for the nation as a whole.

Where to find the money is a big question. Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Groisman told international donors in Brussels on July 8 that the most recent International Monetary Fund bailout loan of \$18 billion would not be enough. He also said that Ukraine would ask donors for helping restore the infrastructure in Donetsk and Luhansk and would need something like a Marshall Plan, a reference to the reconstruction plan by Western allies to rebuild Germany after World War II.

President Petro Poroshenko's representative in the Donbas, Iryna Herashchenko, reported on July 9 that the European Union is ready to provide €1.5 billion to rebuild damaged infrastructure.

The U.S. might get involved as well. On July 10, U.S. Vice President Joe Biden spoke with Poroshenko about America providing aid for reconstruction, according to the White House.

While the government will assume responsibility for rebuilding infrastructure, the question remains about who will pay for damaged homes.

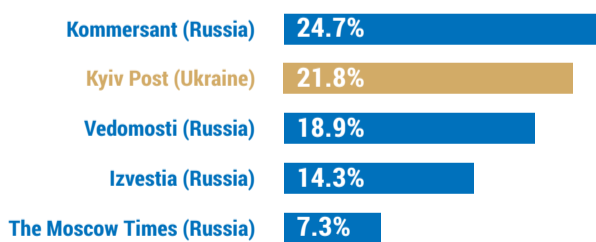
According to lawyer Andriy Kot of Antika Law Firm, insurance companies are out because almost no Ukrainians insure their property. The government also has "no clear obligations" to compensate, Kot said. He expects the creation of a special fund to finance rebuilding of residential areas, perhaps with money raised by donations.

Kyiv Post business journalist Evan Ostryzniuk can be reached at ostryzniuk@kyivpost.com.

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* – according to a survey by Moscow-based AGT Communications Agency carried out over the six month period to May 21.

At least 270 soldiers killed in Russia's war against Ukraine

BY OLENA GONCHAROVA
AND IRYNA YEROSHKO
GONCHAROVA@KYIVPOST.COM,
YEROSHKOIRYNA@GMAIL.COM

Russia's war against Ukraine continues to claim lives. At least 52 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since July 10, bringing the death toll to at least 270 Ukrainian servicemen, according to official figures, while the Kyiv Post count is 275 soldiers.

One of the heaviest losses came overnight on July 11 in Luhansk Oblast's Zelenopillia, where Russia-backed insurgents opened fire with a Grad multiple rocket launcher, killing 19 victims from Ukraine's 24th and 79th brigades and wounding another 93 men.

Kostiantyn Poliakov, who serves in the second battalion of the 79th brigade, barely survived. "Now I have two birthdays. My birthday, which is Oct. 24, and the second, which is July 12, when I survived the attack," he wrote on his Facebook page after the fight.

The following is the list of the victims known to be killed July 10-16:

July 10

Viktor Savanchuk, 21, soldier from Vinnytsia Oblast. He was deployed to the front from Khmelnytskyi Oblast where he was serving. Savanchuk leaves his parents and a brother.

Leonid Shyrpal, 32, border guard from Khmelnytskyi Oblast. He was killed in Luhansk Oblast days before his 33rd birthday. "He never hesitated to help, he was a real man," his comrade, Denys Tyskun, was quoted as saying. Shyrpal leaves a wife and a daughter.

Oleksandr Yakubenko, 39, from Skyra, Kyiv Oblast. He was killed by insurgents as he tried to free Donetsk airport.

July 11

Petro Vasylykha, 22, a soldier from Drohomyshl, Lviv Oblast. "When Petro left for the east he promised that we'll rock at his wedding. He was kind as an angel. And he loved Ukraine so much," a friend of Vasylykha's family was quoted as saying. He was killed near Zelenopillia in Luhansk Oblast. He leaves his parents and two brothers.

Vilgelm Shtoltzel, 22, border guard from Mukachevo in Zakarpattia Oblast. "You shouldn't be afraid of death; you should be afraid of a wasteful life," reads the last note he posted to his timeline on vKontakte page. He was the only son in his family.

Ihor Borys, 31, soldier from Drohobych in Lviv Oblast. Borys, a professional weightlifter, was mobilized to the army and killed in Zelenopillia on July 11. He leaves a wife and a newborn son in his native city.

Andriy Leskiv, 44, soldier from Yavoriv, Lviv Oblast. He leaves a wife and three children.

Sergiy Prots, 20, from Darnutske village in Volyn Oblast. He served in the 24th Mechanized Zalizna brigade in Lviv Oblast.

Ivan Holota, soldier from Pushkove village, Kirovohrad Oblast. Holota leaves a wife and 4-year old daughter.

Vasyl Kovalyk, 23, soldier from Volyn Oblast. Kovalyk was serving for 24th mechanized brigade. He was killed in Zelenopillia on July 11.

Vasyl Vovk, 23, soldier from Koblo village in Lviv Oblast.



Ihor Momot



Oleh Hlushchak



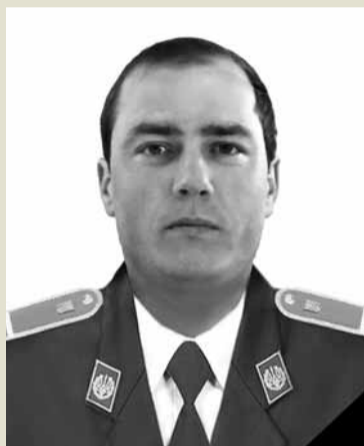
Anatoliy Lutsko



Dmytro Syrbu



Vilgelm Shtoltzel



Oleksaiy Tsyhankov



Pavlo Dyyak



Ihor Borys



Dmytro Kuzmin



Serhiy Muravskiy



Ihor Petriv



Serhiy Prots



Petro Vasylykha



Vasyl Vovk



Andriy Leskiv



Oleksandr Tkachenko

Marian Dyshlo, 44, soldier from Stebnyk in Lviv Oblast.

Mykhailo Plushch, 27, soldier from Kirovohrad Oblast. He served in 79th armored brigade.

Yuriy Holub, soldier from Lviv. Holub served in 24th mechanized brigade in Lviv.

Volodymyr Verbytsky, soldier from Lviv. He was killed in Zelenopillia on July 11.

Taras Mysyk, soldier from Novoyarivsk, Lviv Oblast. Mysyk was killed in Zelenopillia on July 11.

Mykhailo Lohin, soldier from Koty, Lviv Oblast. Lohin was killed in Zelenopillia on July 11.

Oleh Hlushchak, 31, border guard officer was killed near Dovzhansky checkpoint in Luhansk Oblast on July 11. He leaves a wife and 4-year old son.

Oleksandr Tkachenko, 44, the former Berkut riot police officer from Sumy volunteered to the army. His comrades say he was a fair and attentive commander who shared his food with the residents of the towns held by separatists. Tkachenko once saved 150 hostages in Mykolaivka town in Donetsk Oblast. "He was always first. And he was first who died as his car tripped a mine left by sepa-

ratists. However, he saved the lives of 30 comrades who drove behind him," local police spokeswoman Elvira Bihanova said.

Ihor Momot, 48, border guard. Momot's comrades used to call him a legend. "Every night I spoke to this outstanding man, we discussed a situation on Ukraine's border. I've never seen someone more courageous than him," Ukrainian ex-De- →9

→ **8** fence Minister Mykhailo Koval said. The victim led a group patrolling Ukraine's border with Russia. Momot was killed overnight July 11 as terrorists opened fire from a Grad multiple rocket launcher. He leaves a wife and 15-year-old daughter.

Anatoliy Lutsko, 28, senior sergeant from Bobrynets, Kirovohrad Oblast. He was killed in Luhansk Oblast on July 11.

Dmytro Syrbu, 20, border guard from Sarata village in Odesa Oblast. He enrolled in the military in April. Syrbu was killed during an overnight attack by insurgents in Luhansk Oblast. He leaves his parents in his native village.

Vasyl Poliakov, 23, a border guard from Odesa Oblast. Poliakov was killed on July 11 near Dovzhansky checkpoint in Luhansk Oblast as terrorists opened fire with a Grad multiple rocket launcher.

Dmytro Kuzmin, 40, Ukraine's National Guard soldier. Kuzmin's friends recalled painting and photography were among his hobbies. He was an active EuroMaidan Revolution supporter and then joined the Donbas Battalion. "He left lots of the pictures from the front and that's all we have now. All the soldiers grieve for him," Semen Semenchenko, Donbas Battalion commander, wrote on his Facebook page. Kuzmin leaves a wife and two sons in Kyiv.

Vitaliy Mykhailov, 32, gunner from Kozyn village, Kyiv Oblast. He was killed after triggering an explosive device on a route for military vehicles, in the village Krasnopartizansk in Luhansk Oblast.

Anatoliy Savchenko, 21, soldier from Pirnove village, Kyiv Oblast. He served in 72nd mechanized brigade in Bila Tserkva.

Oleksandr Kostyuchenko, from Demydiv in Kyiv Oblast, was a senior sergeant of the 72nd mechanized brigade of Bila Tserkva.

Vasyl Yaroslavtsev, 32, soldier from Dnipropetrovsk. Yaroslavtsev served in 93rd brigade. He died rescuing his comrade.

July 12

Ihor Petriv, 46, border guard. His vehicle struck a mine near Marynivka village in Donetsk Oblast while he was transporting the body of his fallen comrade Ihor Momot to his native Cherkasy Oblast. "Ihor never complained and was very modest. I'll always remember his smile," his friend Valeriy Makeev wrote on his Facebook page. Petriv leaves a wife and a daughter.

Dmytro Volkov, 22, soldier from Prechystivka, Donetsk Oblast, was in the 72nd mechanized brigade of Bila Tserkva.

Vladyslav Belarus, 21, soldier from Lubny, Poltava Oblast, was in the 72nd mechanized brigade of Bila Tserkva.

Mykola Kalashnyk, 25, from Cherkasy, a senior soldier, was a gunner with the 72th mechanized brigade.

Abdriy Moruhiiy, 40, a lieutenant from Branytsia, Chernihiv Oblast.

Artem Netrunenko, 25, member of Aydar Battalion. Netrunenko was a history major who joined the battalion in May. His friend, Nataliya Pshenianik, recalled he was a local EuroMaidan Revolution supporter who did not fear death. He was killed in the Luhansk suburbs in a shootout with insurgents. Netrunenko leaves his parents in Luhansk.

Pavlo Dyyak, 44, a soldier from Grechany, Khmelnytskyi Oblast, died from a blast mine explosion. "The eldest daughter really expected father for her prom night. Pavlo went to the border in March. His family was waiting for him back home every day. So he came back. In a coffin," a friend said.

Valeriy Vashchenko, 22, sol-



Oleksandr Nekhai



Artem Netrunenko



Maksym Benderov



Andriy Shudravyi



Viktor Savanchuk



Mykhailo Plushch



Yuriy Holub



Leonid Shyrpal



Vladyslav Belarus



Anatoliy Savchenko



Yuriy Olinerchuk



Taras Mysyk



Andriy Moruhiiy



Mykola Kalashnyk



Bohdan Zavada

Casualties in Russia's war against Ukraine

Civilians killed	550 (16 children)
Soldiers killed	275
Soldiers injured	942
Refugees from Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and Crimea	86,609

Sources: Ukrainian Health Ministry, Defence Ministry Medical Service, Defence Ministry, United Nations, anti-terrorist operation spokesman Vladyslav Selezniiov

dier from Zhytomyr Oblast. He was killed in fight with insurgents near Luhansk. Vashchenko leaves his parents and two brothers in his native Horodyshche village.

Yuriy Olinerchuk, 22, soldier from Zhytomyr Oblast. Olinerchuk used to work as in Kyiv as a builder, but then joined the army in early March. He leaves his parents, sister and two brothers.

July 13

Serhiy Muravskiy, 20, a soldier from Vinnytsia. Muravskiy was killed in clashes with separatists while unblocking Luhansk airport on July 13. He left his mother in his native Khmilnyk in Vinnytsia Oblast.

July 14

Yuriy Trokhymchuk, 25, a soldier from Zalazziy village in Volyn Oblast.

He died in a battle near Krasnodon in Luhansk Oblast.

Andriy Shudravyi, 24, soldier from Yaremche, Ivano Frankivsk Oblast. Shudravyi was deployed to the country's east in early May. His armored personnel carrier struck a mine. He leaves wife and 3-year old child.

Oleksandr Nekhai, 38, soldier from Sukholisy village, Kyiv Oblast. He leaves a family in Bila Tserkva.

Yuriy Bilobrov, 28, Kyiv Oblast, company commander of 128 Uzhgorod brigade, died in battle near Luhansk.

July 15

Ihor Kantor, soldier from Volyn Oblast. His compatriot, Valeriy Kurstak, said the village raised money to buy a bulletproof vest for the soldier, but he never received it. Kantor died in a battle near Amvrosiivka village in Donetsk Oblast.

Maksym Benderov, 24, from Aleksandria, Kirovohrad Oblast. He died near Izvaryne, Luhansk Oblast. He leaves his parents and a brother.

Stanislav Moiseev, a soldier from Kirovohrad Oblast. He died in battle near Izvaryne village in Luhansk Oblast.

Dmytro Riabiy, gunner from Kirovohrad Oblast. He died in battle near Izvaryne village in Luhansk Oblast.

Maksym Verbviy, gunner from Kirovohrad Oblast. He died in battle near Izvaryne village in Luhansk Oblast.

Mykola Olekseev, deputy commander of the intelligence group from Kirovohrad Oblast. Olekseev died in battle near Izvaryne village in Luhansk Oblast.

Bohdan Karavaiskiy, commander of special task force from

Kirovohrad Oblast. Karavaiskiy died in battle near Izvaryne village in Luhansk Oblast.

Yuriy Kovalenko, deputy commander of 3rd special task force unit of Ukraine's Defense Ministry from Kirovohrad. He died in battle near Izvaryne village in Luhansk Oblast.

Ivan Markov, spy-gunner of special task force.

July 16

Bohdan Zavada, 35, Ukraine's National Guard lieutenant from Zaporizhzhia Oblast. Zavada was killed in a shootout near Marynivka village in Donetsk Oblast. He leaves a wife and 12-year-old son.

Kyiv Post staff writer Olena Goncharova can be reached at goncharova@kyivpost.com. Kyiv Post staff writer Iryna Yeroshko can be reached at yeroshkoiryna@gmail.com

KEYS to the map

- 1** **Hotel Europeysky**
149 Dmytrivna str.
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After Ukraine liberates city, joyful residents look to rebuild

→6 Oleksandr Nechyporenko, 35, a sergeant who led the storming of the separatist-held police building, said the Ukrainian servicemen found a bunch of Russian dry ration packs, cell phones with Russian SIM cards and "papers of retired Russian officers" there. There was also lots of Russian medication not sold in Ukraine.

The insurgents' arbitrariness caused discontent among people in Siversk, but they were too afraid to challenge the gunmen. "There were drug addicts, losers and newcomers from Russia," according to one local businessman too fearful to be identified publicly.

After June 20, when the Ukrainian troops liberated the nearby village of



A local citizen says goodbye to Ukrainian soldiers who leave the recently liberated city of Siversk on July 14. (Anastasia Vlasova)



Ukrainian soldiers and a boy rest on top of a tank in the recently recaptured city of Siversk in Donetsk Oblast, on July 14. (Anastasia Vlasova)

Yampil, where the separatists kept a highly protected checkpoint, Siversk knew it was next.

The sounds of shelling became commonplace. The separatists responded with artillery.

A fierce assault on July 9 led to the liberation of Siversk within 24 hours. The Russian flag from the city hall was removed, burned and replaced by a Ukrainian one.

"People were crying, hugging and thanking us," said Captain Valery Levchenko, 39, head of 24th infantry brigade from Yavoriv city of Lviv Oblast that liberated Siversk.

Many residents had left by the time of the decisive fight, but one woman was killed in the crossfire and her husband his both legs. Another man was brought to the hospital in a coma after

being struck by rubble.

The insurgents escaped Siversk, leaving dozens of land mines on roads and fields as they retreated. On June 11, one of these mines took the lives of three police officers of the special unit that came to re-establish order in the city.

Some insurgents are still hiding out in the woods outside Siversk. But slowly the city is going back to normal, with more and more buses and cars bringing the residents returning home every day. Soldiers now see more

civilians in the city even as armored personnel carriers are as frequent on the roads as cars.

A local businessman met his wife arriving from Kharkiv and showed the Kyiv Post a box with big nails he bought to fix a roof of his house damaged by shelling.

"I will fix it all ,no problem," he said. "The most important is that we've got peace back."

Kyiv Post staff writer Oksana Grytsenko can be found at grytsenko@kyivpost.com

Editor's Note: This article has been produced with support from the project www.mymedia.org.ua, financially supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, and implemented by a joint venture between NIRAS and BBC Media Action. The content in this article may not necessarily reflect the views of the Danish government, NIRAS and BBC Action Media.

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Love conquering war in bedside weddings



Olena and Oleksandr Ponomariov (L) and Olena and Ruslan Yarysh (R) celebrate their wedding in a hospital room following after tying the knot. Ponomariov and Yarysh, both professional soldiers, were severely injured during the anti-terrorist operation in the East, both paralyzed in their lower bodies. (UNIAN)

BY DARYNA SHEVCHENKO
SHEVCHENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

With a gunshot wound to his lung, Oleksandr Ponomariov crawled around the grass near Krasnyi Lyman in Donetsk Oblast, still trying to fend off the attacking Russian-backed insurgents.

At that moment, Ponomariov could hardly imagine himself as a groom in the next 10 days. But that's what happened.

"He thought he would die in the next few hours," his new wife, Olena

Ponomariova, 29, says, as she sits on the bench in a hospital park while her husband was napping.

Too weak to speak much, with his lower body still paralyzed, Ponomariov married his true love on July 9. Volunteers supplied the rings, the bride's gown and treats for the guests.

"My husband smiles every time he sees a ring on my finger," Ponomariova says and adds she is very grateful to the volunteers.

The soldier's reconnaissance group came under shelling on June 30 when moving deeper into enemy territory.

Ponomariov, 32, was shot first. The bullet went through the ribs, spine and lungs. He kept fighting for another hour until help arrived to repulse the attack. He was evacuated by helicopter to Kharkiv for surgery and then to Kyiv.

"He lost so much blood; he was dragged away from death by his ears," says Ponomariova tearfully. She is a soldier herself, mobilized in early March, but she was never sent to the country's eastern front.

The couple lives in Mykolayiv. They met four years ago in the army. Ponomariov proposed many times, but

never found time for the wedding ceremony until July.

At least 270 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and more than 922 injured since the beginning of the anti-terrorist operation in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

Olena Yarysh, a 24-year-old from Mykolaiv, says she remembers when her husband Ruslan Yarysh, 23, left home for the front. "We were back from shopping and, at 5 p.m. he got a call to get back to his military unit," she says.

They were reunited in → 13

Food Critic



WITH OLENA GONCHAROVA
GONCHAROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Crimean Tatar café adds a new taste to Lviv culinary life

LVIV, Ukraine – It is a small cafe in Lviv that became its own Crimea, minus the sea and swimsuits.

In early May, the family of Shefqet Yuzbashev, a Crimean Tatar who moved to Lviv from Crimea after Russia annexed the peninsula, opened a small restaurant of Crimean Tatar national cuisine in the heart of western Ukraine's unofficial capital.

"We visited our friends in Lviv this March and then decided to stay," Yuzbashev recalls. He and his family members are now among almost 2,000 refugees who fled to Lviv from Crimea, according to United Nations statistics.

His tiny Aishe cafe, with only nine tables, ended up in a quiet courtyard in Andreolli Passage in front of Lviv's city council. Yuzbashev said he was busy from the start as visitors came in to try Tatar food. There are many foreigners among Yuzbashev's guests. "Even Russian tourists call in sometimes," he says.

Months later, the cafe is quieter as tourists prefer staying outside during summertime. Apart from Crimean Tatar cuisine, the venue offers a variety of European dishes. "Unfortunately, we couldn't cook here everything we can because we lack space and open fire for our traditional dishes," Yuzbashev explains.

However, the dishes served in the cafe is still delicious. The most popular are traditional mutton lamb, kebab, shashlyk, stewed vegetables and eastern pastry.

Yuzbashev said almost every item is the pride of the kitchen, but one of the most favorite orders is Lamian (Hr 30), homemade noodles served with beef, potatoes, carrots, eggplant and spices. It is a substantial meal.

Yuzbashev's family is getting used to Lviv's atmosphere and its way of life. His three kids are already enrolled in a local Lviv school and the entrepreneur himself is looking for a better place for the cafe. He says he misses his homeland, but is not sure whether his family could ever move back to Crimea. "One day I believe Crimea will find its way, it will no longer be Russian or Ukrainian – it will be European as it should be," Yuzbashev said.

Kyiv Post staff writer Olena Goncharova can be reached at gongcharova@kyivpost.com

Aishe cafe
Rynok Square, 29 (Andreolli passageway)
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KyivPost



Two policemen accompany Ukrainian producer Oleh Sentsov to a Russian court on July 7 in Moscow. (Courtesy)

Odesa Film Festival shows movie by jailed Sentsov

DENYS KRASNIKOV
CRASNICKOW@YANDEX.RU

This year's Odesa International Film Festival includes more than 100 films, including one from Ukrainian film director Oleh Sentsov. He is imprisoned in Russia on what appear to be trumped-up terrorism charges over his opposition to the Kremlin annexation of Crimea. Any money raised from ticket sales will go to Sentsov's family to cover legal expenses, organizers say.

The movie, *Gamer*, is about youngster Kross, who quit school to become a professional computer gamer.

The movie's main character lives in a small town and has conflicts with his parents over his obsession with computer games. Kross trains day and night, dreaming to be the best in Internet gaming. The plot involves the challenges of provincial life, including the drama of being an outcast.

This film has premiered internationally at the Rotterdam International Film Festival and has won some prizes. Despite a budget of \$20,000, the film is a success, Sentsov said.

He knew his subject. The director said he has been obsessed with computer games for eight years.

The real-life drama of Sentsov, an activist in the EuroMaidan Revolution that some believe triggered Russian President Vladimir Putin's war against Ukraine, shows no sign of ending.

Sentsov was arrested in Crimea on May 10 by Russian's Federal Security Service and is believed to be held in solitary confinement in Moscow. According to the FSB, various explosives, weapons, gas masks and helmets were found in his apartment. Now Sentsov is accused of terrorism and may be sentenced to 20 years imprisonment.

But artists internationally are coming to Sentsov's support.

Mike Downey, a British film producer, gathered signatures for petition demanding Sentsov's release. The petition was sent to Putin.

Russian film critic Olexandr Gusev says Sentsov is a remarkable director and a decent person. "It is obvious, that he could not be involved in terrorism of any kind. He was arrested only because of his dissent," Gusev said.

After Russian's annexation of Crimea, Sentsov was granted Russian citizenship automatically, although he never requested it.

"I want to protest against the deprivation of my Ukrainian citizenship. I was Ukrainian and I still am," Sentsov said. Nonetheless, he will be tried under Russian law.

Kyiv Post staff writer Denys Krasnikov can be reached at crasnickow@yandex.ru

Wounded soldiers marry their true loves in hospital weddings

→ **12** Kharkiv hospital's intensive care unit. Yarysh's husband was sleeping after the surgery when doctors let her in. "He was so motionless, all in bruises," the young woman recalls. "The doctor shook him and asked who is here. He opened his eyes, said 'this is my sunshine' and closed them again."

Soldier Ruslan Yarysh was shot in the lungs on June 19 by a sniper. "My bad, wasn't attentive enough," he says, lying in the hospital bed and twisting his wedding ring. His both legs put on holders, his body covered in bandages. The ring is a new addition.

Olena and Ruslan Yarysh also got married on July 9, in the same hospital room as Olena and Oleksandr Ponomariov.

"This time I proposed to him," Olena Yarysh laughs, noting that her husband was worried about his new disabilities. "This is not even a question for me, I love him with all my heart," she says.

Yarysh doesn't leave her husband's side and says he is a perfect match. The couple met at work in Mykolaiv. "In two weeks my little daughter was calling him father," Yarysh recalls, smiling at the memory. She plans to go home in a few days and take her daughter to Kyiv. "She misses him tons and I want her to know that her father is a hero," the woman says.

Yarysh and Ponomariov have similar injuries and dream of a surgery in Israel. Some 100,000 euros need to be raised for the medical treatment, however. "I know there they can get them back on their feet even if there is only a tiny possibility," Ponomariova says.

Ruslan Yarysh isn't thinking much about the future now or complaining about the war. He is grateful to those

who help him. "All these people don't know me, but help all the time, bring money, food and even made this wedding," he says.

The new brides hope people will remember to help Ukraine's injured heroes. "I am not sure that what we did will inspire other couples," Ponomariova says sadly. "I just hope women will at least stop breaking up with the soldiers here."

Kyiv Post staff writer Daryna Shevchenko can be reached at shevchenko@kyivpost.com.

Editor's Note: More than 920 Ukrainian soldiers have been injured in Russia's war against Ukraine. These two victims need money for expensive spinal cord surgery in Israel. The following are bank details of both couples and their contact information.

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Olena Volodymyrivna
Account number: 29244825509100
Bank code: 305299
Enterprize code: 14360570
TIN: 3157523441
Contact number: 093-362-25-52 (Olena Ponomariova, wife)

Privat Bank Card
5168 7572 2128 0433
Receiver: Maksymenko (Yarysh) Olena Grygorivna
Account Number: 29244825509100
Bank code: 305299
Enterprize code: 14360570
Contact number: 0936673783 (Olena Yarysh, wife)

Ukrainian picked as one of world's 10 most desirable men

BY NATALIYA TRACH
TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM

When it comes to desirability and beauty, Ukrainian women usually get most of the compliments and attention worldwide. But one man, Ukrainian actor and model Bohdan Yushchuk, is now considered the 10th most desirable man in the world. He is also, as it turns out, a nice guy.

That's where Yushchuk finished in the annual Mr. World men's beauty contest, which tested strength and talent among 46 competitors competing for the title. The crown went to Nicklas Pedersen, 23, of Denmark, while sec-

ond and third places went to contestants from Nigeria and Mexico.

"It is not just a beauty contest," says Yushchuk, 26, who also won the Mister Congeniality title. "It was a competition of manhood, courage and fortitude."

Yushchuk, a professional actor, took part to become famous and as a personally challenge. "I found out the limits of my body as well as how it feels when you perform in front of multi-million member audience," he explains.

This year's Mr. World started on June 1 in Torquay, a small town in southern England, and lasted for 16

days. Men between the ages of 18- 28 competed in swimming, running, video production and various other performances on stage. Even their behavior, manners, hair and fashion style were evaluated by judges.

Ukraine's Yushchuk won the Mr. Ukraine competition in May and had only one month to prepare for the Mr. World Contest. "I was training two times a day and six days a week to bring my body to my top fitness form," he says, managing to lose eight kilos before the contest.

While the sport tournament was very exhausting, the talent competition turned out to be an even bigger challenge for him.

Yushchuk chose to perform English comedian, actor and filmmaker Charlie Chaplin's bread roll dance, from the 1925 American silent movie comedy *The Gold Rush*, for the talent competition.

He gets a lot more attention from women lately since his contest performance, but he's already spoken for. "I have the best girlfriend in the world," he says. "She supports me in all my endeavors."

After the competition, Yushchuk got several offers from Ukrainian and foreign film producers to appear in their works. He is full of enthusiasm and ambition. "I want to become a Hollywood star," he says.

Aside from the personal benefits, Yushchuk wanted to make his motherland proud. "Many say I should go fight in the east instead of participating in those contests, but I am not a soldier

and by doing what I do I also can glorify my country," the actor said.

The website for the 2014 Mr. World "The World's Most Desirable Man" contest on June 15 is at http://www.mrworld.tv/competitors-list.html#U8aIg5R_uE5

Kyiv Post staff writer Nataliya Trach can be reached at trach@kyivpost.com



Bohdan Yushchuk stands on the stage of Mr. World, a beauty pageant for men, after performing Charlie Chaplin's bread roll dance during the talent show. Yushchuk, 26, won Mr. Congeniality title. (Courtesy)

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July 26

Fontaliza

Fontaliza is a young Ukrainian rock band from Horlivka in Donetsk Oblast. It's warm up for Okean Elzy at Kyiv's Olympyskiy Stadium increased the band's popularity. This concert's program promises to include songs from Fontaliza's new album "Under the Floor."
Fontaliza. July 26. 8 p.m. Green Theater (4 Parkova Road). Hr 60 – 120

Color Fest Holi Ukraine

The amusement is inspired by the Indian spring festival called Holi. This holiday traditionally consists of festivities, stewing with colored powders (made of herbs and natural pigments) and dousing with water. Apart from this, Color Fest Holi in Kyiv promises to have body-art and entertainment for children, mehndi (temporary tattoos) and Indian dance master-classes, gigantic soap bubbles, DJs, musical performances, souvenirs and many more. Dry powders are included in the ticket price.

Color Fest Holi. Aug. 9. 1 p.m. Ledovyi Stadium (9 Akademika Hlushkova Av.). Hr 180



Aug. 9

(Courtesy)



Aug. 8-10

(zaxidfest.com)

Zahid Fest

Zahid Fest is an annual musical festival started in 2009. Since then it actively works for development of the festival movement in Ukraine. This year's headliners are the US's Anti-Flag, Clawfinger from Sweden, Ukrainian Braty Gadukiny band and legendary Belarus band Lyapis Trubetskoy. Among others one can find Ukraine's Scryabin and Tartak bands and Russia's Noize MC and Lumen. Two tent camps are available on the festival's territory.

Zahid Fest. Aug. 8-10. Rodatychy (Lviv Oblast). Hr 400 – 550

Intim Fest

July 19-20

Intim Fest is Ukraine's delves into sexology and psychology. The festival is aimed at those interested in relations between the sexes, widening knowledge

about themselves and improving relationships with partners. The guests will hear from leading Ukrainian and foreign specialists on the development of sexual, physical and psychological health and finding harmony. The program includes master classes, lectures, music and dance performances.

Intim Fest. July 19-20. 9 a.m. Truhanov Island (Kyiv). Hr 800 – 1,800



(Courtesy)

Bustles and crinolines

Bustles and crinolines is an exposition on history of fashion in Manufactura Art Center. It brings together an ancient collection of elegant clothes and accessories, the only one of the kind on post-Soviet territory. The collection consists of almost one thousand exhibits, the oldest dates back to 1800. All the luxurious ballroom dresses, capes, toilettes for visits, wedding and everyday dresses belonged to the European ladies of the 19th

Turniury ta Krynoliny. July 20 – Aug. 5. 11 a.m. – 9 p.m. Manufactura (Khodosiivka, 2 Obukhiv Highway). Hr 15 – 30



July 20 – Aug. 5



July 24

(oif.com.ua)

Maidan

Maidan is a new documentary by Ukrainian director Sergei Loznitsa. Earlier presented at the 67th annual Cannes Film Festival and the Odessa International Film Festival, it is going to the big screens of Ukrainian movie theatres. The film shows Ukrainians rediscovering their national identity in the 90-day revolution and includes chronicles of the events that took place at Kyiv's Independence Square in November 2013- February 2014.

Maidan. July 24. Kyiv (19 Chervonoarmiyska St.). For more information visit <http://www.kievkino.com.ua/>

Roni Ben-Hur Trio

Roni Ben-Hur stands out as one of the elite players in modern jazz. For now he works in trio with Duduka da Fonesca (percussion) and Ark Ovrutsk (contrabass, bass guitar). An International Jazz Subscribe introduces this project to support the jazz festival Ukraine Jazz Summer 2014 under the patronage of the embassy of Israel in Ukraine. The trio is international as all musicians belong to different countries - USA, Brazil, Israel.

Roni Ben-Hur Trio. July 22. 7:30 p.m. Caribbean Club (4 Symona Petliury St.). Hr 80 – 250



(ronibenhur.com)

July 22



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Interested applicants should fill out the application form in English and email it to: KyivHR@state.gov or fax it to: **521-5155**. The deadline for receiving the applications is **July 28, 2014 at 6 P.M. Kyiv time**.



Employment Fair

September 13, 2014

Contact Tetyana Vasilko,
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