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vol. 20, issue 29

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July 17, 2015

Murder In The Sky: Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17

Clear And Convincing Evidence



Angela Rudhart-Dyczynski and Jerzy Dyczynski from Australia react as they arrive on July 26, 2014 at the crash site of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 where they lost their 25-year-old daughter Fatima (portrayed on the father's t-shirt), near the village of Hrabove in Russian-occupied Donetsk Oblast. All 298 people on board the flight were killed when Russian-backed separatists allegedly shot it down on July 17, 2014 using a surface-to-air missile system supplied by Russia. (AFP)

BY OLEG SUKHOV
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A steady drip, drip of leaked information from investigators, along with other reports, has over the past year accumulated into a vast pool of damning evidence that Russia was responsible for the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 in Ukraine on July 17, 2014.

The bulk of the eyewitness testimony, open-source intelligence and leaks from investigators all point to one conclusion: the plane was shot down by a Russian Buk surface-to-air missile from territory controlled by Kremlin-backed separatists.

The investigation into how the civilian plane crashed, however, is only expected to be released in October by the Dutch Safety Board.

All 298 people on board the airliner were killed. More than half of them, 193, were from the Netherlands, while Malaysia lost 43 citizens, and Australia 27.

Efforts to establish who was responsible for shooting down the plane have not been confined to the official authorities of these countries. Citizen journalists have scoured the Internet for relevant information. This evidence, when combined with official sources and those dug up by journalists, has yielded a remark-

ably detailed account of the tragedy's circumstances.

According to photo, video and text evidence collected by Bellingcat, a British open-source intelligence outfit, a convoy containing the Buk M-1 missile system that later shot down the Boeing left the 53rd anti-aircraft missile brigade base in the Russian city of Kursk on June 23. It reached the city of Millerovo in Rostov Oblast close to the Ukrainian border on June 25.

Last July the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) published what it said was an intercepted call between Kremlin-backed separatists in which they confirm that the Buk missile system with a crew had crossed the

border into Ukraine on July 17, 2014.

Alexander Khodakovsky, commander of the Moscow-backed Vostok battalion, confirmed on July 23, 2014 in an interview with Reuters that Kremlin-backed forces had received a Buk missile system. But he later backtracked on his claim, telling the U.K.'s Guardian newspaper that he couldn't be sure the Russian-separatists had a Buk system.

The Dutch-led joint investigation team said in March that, according to one of the scenarios it was considering, the Buk missile that shot down the plane moved from the separatist-controlled town of Severny in Ukraine, which is less than one →10

Mukacheve violence seen as bad omen for Ukraine

BY ALLISON QUINN
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Analysts fear that vigilantism and violence, like the kind that took place in Mukacheve on July 11, will become more common if authorities don't do more to stop corruption and punish crimes.

Analysts at the same time remain skeptical that Ukraine's political leaders will strengthen rule of law and enforce the law effectively, since they or their allies could become targets of criminal investigations under an independent law enforcement system.

Two Right Sector members were killed in a shootout with police over smuggling in the westernmost Zakarpattia Oblast, which borders four European Union nations.

President Petro Poroshenko responded on July 15 by transferring Hennadiy Moskal from his duties as governor of war-torn Luhansk Oblast to Zakarpattia Oblast.

"He's proven in Luhansk that he can bring order and remove lawlessness and marauding, and he's demonstrated that he represents true Ukrainian authority that is not corrupt, that is patriotic, and whose main task is to help people," Poroshenko said, according to Interfax-Ukraine.

Moskal governed Zakarpattia in 2001-2002 and was chief of police in the region in 1995-1997.

According to Viktoriya Podgorina, the director of the Center for Socio-Political Design, the Muchacheve gangland-style fight shows the lack of progress in fighting corruption, smuggling and the stubborn insistence of Ukrainian politicians of clinging to the status quo despite the rhetoric of reform.

The volunteer Right Sector Battalion, which is not part of Ukraine's military or law enforcement structures, claimed the battle in Mukacheve is part of a wider fight against corruption. In their version, the conflict started when members of the group confronted government officials about involvement in a smuggling ring. The region provides easy access to Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland – meaning billions of dollars in cross-border smuggling of contraband. →11

Inside:

News → 2, 3, 9-11 | Opinion → 4, 5
Business → 6-8 | Lifestyle → 12-14
Employment/Real Estate/Classifieds → 15

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Головний редактор Брайан Боннер

Відповідальний за випуск Наталія Бугайова

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Реєстраційне свідоцтво

Кв № 15261-3833ПР від 19.06.09.

Передплатний індекс ДП Преса 40528

Надруковано ТОВ «Новий друк».

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Ukraine's Heroes

Editor's note: Ukraine's Heroes is a Kyiv Post project devoted to Ukrainian army heroes wounded in Russia's war against the nation. Periodically, we will tell stories of these wounded warriors, many of whom need money for treatment, surgery and prosthesis.

Freed Donetsk airport 'cyborg' withstood torture in captivity

BY DARYNA SHEVCHENKO
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When 42-year-old Yuriy Shkabura gets nervous, he starts tugging a blue-and-yellow ribbon tied to his wrist. The ribbon, bearing the colors of Ukraine's national flag, is dirty and shabby, but the soldier refuses to take it off. Shkabura's wife gave him the good luck charm as a farewell gift before the war. He never took it off even under the threat of being maimed in captivity by Russian-separatist forces.

Shkabura was a "cyborg," the moniker that Russian-separatists gave the outnumbered Ukrainian troops who staunchly defended the Donetsk airport for 240 days before it was reduced to rubble. He was one of the few who managed to leave the airport building after the second of two explosions destroyed it on Jan. 20.

Ever since Ukrainian forces re-took the airport in May 2014, Russian-led separatists had tried to win it back. The defense of the facility lasted eight months, with less than a hundred men inside the airport buildings at any one time, according to the soldiers.

By the end of January, Ukrainian forces were reduced to holding the second floor of the new terminal, flanked by the enemy on three sides. The last airport defenders left the area on Jan. 21, after two explosions on Jan. 19-20 killed most of their comrades and when there was nothing left to defend. It is still not clear how many people died defending the airport. Volunteers say they are in the dozens.

Shkabura remembers that someone helped him out of the airport. But with severe shell shock and a wounded, crushed leg, he went the wrong way and walked straight into a Russian-separatist checkpoint, where he was taken captive, to be held for a month.

He was put in a basement together with about a dozen others, including some airport defenders. "They were



Yuriy Shkabura, 42, was part of the last Ukrainian military unit that defended Donetsk airport in January. He spent a month in captivity enduring mock executions and torture by Russian-separatists. (Pavlo Podufalov)

beating us, trying to break us just for the pleasure of seeing us break," Shkabura says.

He says that he was made to face a wall and shot at twice. "The first time they released automatic gunfire above my head and then started asking each of us to shoot at a comrade, one agreed to shoot me," Shkabura says. "The gun wasn't loaded of course. But it's only later that we understood they didn't really want to kill us."

Shkabura says he holds no anger towards the soldier, who agreed to shoot him. "I know how difficult it was not to break," he says closing his eyes at the painful memory.

The guards tried every possible way to break them though. They even threatened to cut Shkabura's hand off if he didn't remove the blue-and-yellow ribbon. He didn't.

Shkabura joined the army in August 2014, and after three months training his unit was sent to the war zone. He defended the rear of the airport from tanks and encroaching heavy artillery. After a short Christmas vacation, he was sent on Jan. 15 as part of the last

troop rotation at the airport.

Shkabura's hands still tremble when he talks about these last five days at the airport. The most difficult thing was watching his comrades suffer from wounds and not being able to help. All the food and water stocks were lost in the debris when the walls collapsed during the first explosion. By the end of the fifth day almost all the soldiers were either wounded or suffering from shell shock, waiting for the order to leave their positions.

No order came though.

"When being sent to the airport, we were told to hold there for a couple of days and then a big military operation would be held and the airport would appear in the deep rear, but it never happened," Shkabura says.

Military analyst Vyacheslav Tseliuko says there were attempts to strengthen the airport's defense from side of Pisky and Spartak. All the attempts failed due to the lack of combat experience in the Ukrainian army. The decision not to give retreat orders was completely political, Tseliuko says. "Politicians were afraid of society's

disapproval and military commanders hoped that at least a small area of the airport could still be held," Tseliuko says. "And it could've been if the enemy hadn't blown up the building."

When nothing remained to defend, and the rescue mission failed, those alive decided to leave on their own. Out of 55 people in Shkabura's 95th battalion present at the airport building, only 14 managed to leave relatively unharmed.

Shkabura's mother is Russian and his father a Ukrainian who had served in the Red Army, stationed in Lithuania. Shkabura never questioned his own loyalties.

"I couldn't sit at home while young boys were fighting and dying," he says.

His wife Natalia Shkabura says he even started to work out and lost some weight before going to war. "We tried to tell him he was too old for this war, but he was unmoved," she says.

Shkabura was freed during a prisoner exchange and has been back home in Bila Tserkva since March.

"He still doesn't eat enough and doesn't sleep at night, he is still there... At the airport," his wife says.

After months of physical treatment, Shkabura is still in need of psychiatric rehabilitation. Always modest when called a hero, Shkabura says he has no regrets about his decision to join the army.

"I don't know how it could have been different. Was I supposed to ignore the war in my country, or what?" he says.

To help the "cyborgs" who defended Donetsk airport, call the volunteer in charge Vyacheslav Trachuk at +380638209146
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Critics say new election law doesn't advance democracy

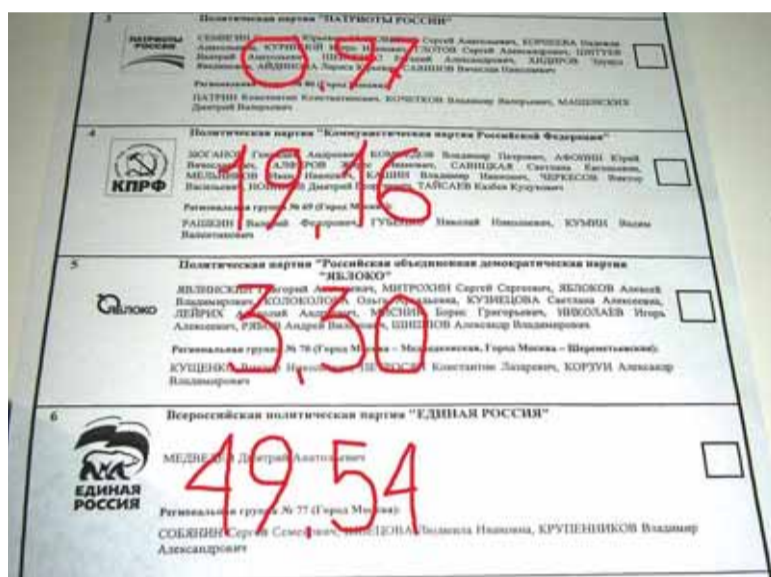
BY JOHANNES WAMBERG ANDERSEN AND MARIANA ANTONOVYCH
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Parliament on July 14 approved new local election rules via a bill that introduces elements of proportional representation in elections to municipal and regional councils, and two-round elections for mayors of large cities.

Although not explicitly required by

the International Monetary Fund and other Western donors, the legislation is nonetheless a key component of Kyiv's plan to decentralize government by delegating more power and functions to regional and local governments.

However, the bill also specifies that the elections, which are scheduled for Oct. 25, won't take place in the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, or in the Russian-annexed Ukrainian territory of Crimea.



A ballot for a local election in Russia with only one option for each party, and displaying candidate names. The ballots for city and oblast elections in the upcoming October elections in Ukraine are expected to resemble the Russian ones allowing voting only by party. (Courtesy)

Local electoral system

	New rules	Old rules
Members of village and township councils	"First-past-the-post" system in single-mandate district	
Members of Crimea Supreme Council, oblast, district, and city councils, as well as city districts – proportional system with preferences	Proportional representation in multi-mandate constituency	Mixed-electoral system with proportional and majority representation
Mayors (in cities with populations more than 90,000)	Absolute majority system in single-mandate district	"First-past-the-post" system in single-mandate district
Heads of villages, townships, cities (with populations under 90,000) and village seniors	"First-past-the-post" system in single-mandate district	

Source: Kyiv Post



A voter in Kurakhovo, west of Donetsk, casts her ballot during the parliamentary election on Oct. 26. Voters face frequent changes to the country's election system. (Anastasia Vlasova)

In addition, under the second Minsk peace agreement, Ukraine was expected to strengthen locally elected bodies and make election procedures more transparent. It is also publicly seen as a chance to sweep away more discredited local elites installed during Viktor Yanukovich's presidency.

Parliament failed, however, to create open-list voting for parties, which could also have contributed to filtering out discredited politicians.

Instead, single-mandate districts were created for regional and city councils, which require voting for an individual candidate belonging to a party, according to an emailed Concorde Capital note on July 15. "But if the candidate's party fails to pass the voting threshold in a given election district (or region), the candidate can't take office, regardless if he or she has won the most votes," the investment bank wrote.

Furthermore, local candidates need approval from their respective party's central leadership, and parties will have the power to recall elected members of local bodies at their discretion,

said political expert Vitaliy Kulyk of the Center for Civic Society Studies.

However, a full version of the bill hasn't been published yet, which has led to uncertainty over the new procedures.

"This will amount to sham elections, benefiting the incumbents," Kulyk said. Andriy Parubiy, the deputy speaker of parliament, disagreed, describing the election law as a "huge step forward, although it's not perfect."

"Now, the voters will decide which candidates get elected. This, in turn, wreaks havoc on corruption," he said.

Still, Andriy Magera, the deputy head of the Central Election Commission, was critical of the law.

"Voters can only choose one candidate from each political party, in other words vote for or against him ... There is no choice. There is no list of, for example, 10 candidates among whom the voter can choose. Instead, we have ... notions aimed at discrediting a progressive proportional representation system with open lists," Magera told the 112 Ukraina channel.

The Bloc of Petro Poroshenko faction in parliament confirmed on July 15 that ballots would have a check box for each party, rather than individual candidates.

"The ballot and (voting) procedure will be simple and understandable to each voter. Neither the length of the ballot nor the procedure for drafting a protocol by electoral commissions will change," the party bloc's statement read.

Among other stipulations in the law is that parties are required to ensure that at least 30 percent of their candidates are female.

But the new law doesn't address voting procedures for refugees. Election watchdog groups are now drafting a separate bill to give internally displaced people the right to vote in the October elections.

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Parliament passes law granting more local authority

BY MARIANA ANTONOVYCH
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Parliament passed constitutional changes that give more power and authority to regional and local governments. The adopted bill also fulfills a key obligation toward implementing the Minsk II peace agreement that was brokered in February. Under the deal, Russian-occupied parts of Luhansk and Donetsk were to be given special legal status.

Broader autonomy for Donbas was envisioned in the Minsk truce, but the measures that were passed only stipulate that a separate law, not requiring approval by the Constitutional Court,

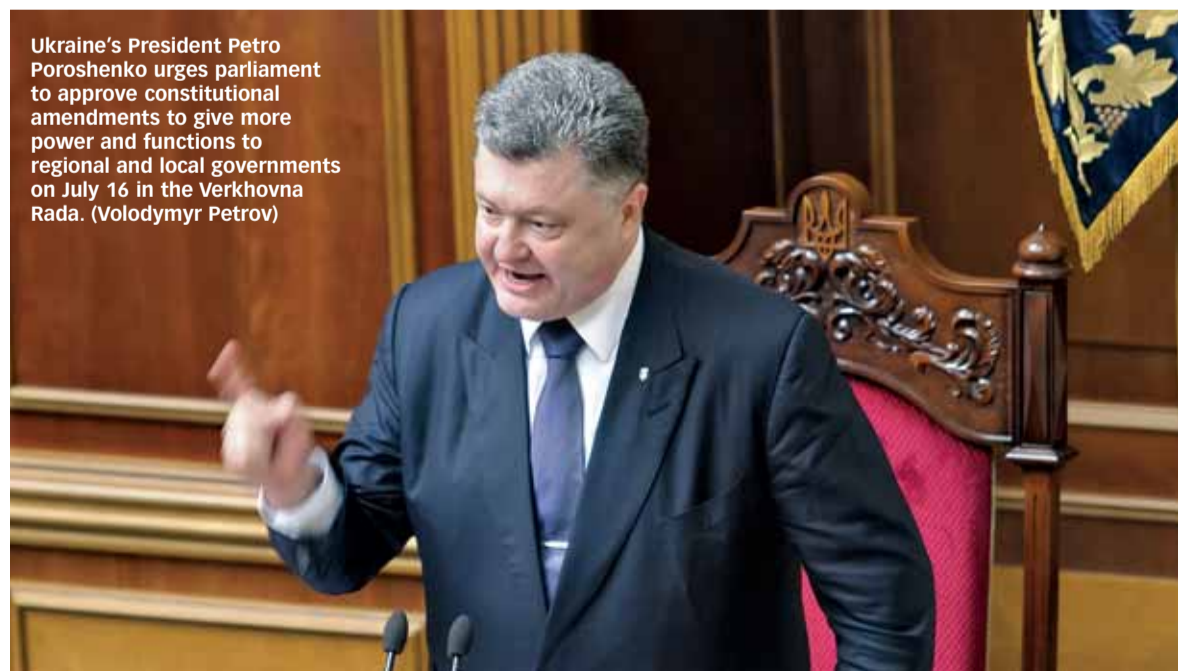
will outline the details of local governance there.

Pending approval by the Constitutional Court, a minimum of 300 subsequent votes in parliament, the measures liquidate heads of local administrations, previously appointed by the president. Their powers will be transferred to district and city executive committees formed by councils.

It also creates the position of prefect, who will ensure that local authorities act within the limits of their powers.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland observed the bill's adoption, which was championed by the pro-presidential camp in parliament.

Perhaps the biggest stumbling to



Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko urges parliament to approve constitutional amendments to give more power and functions to regional and local governments on July 16 in the Verkhovna Rada. (Volodymyr Petrov)

approving the measure again in parliament is the scope of status that Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts will receive in the separate law as foreseen in the current

measure. This leaves the fate of the bill in the air.

The initial version of the bill stipulated that the status of the two east-

ernmost oblasts would be determined in the actual decentralization law, the wording of the bill was revised when Nuland arrived in Kyiv on July → 16

Editorials

MH17 and Putin's end

Russian President Vladimir Putin moved closer to the status of international pariah on July 17, 2014.

That's when, according to an overwhelming body of evidence that has since been uncovered, 298 people on board Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 were killed when it was shot down by a Russian-supplied missile system. Called a Buk, the sophisticated weapon was almost certainly operated by a Russian-trained crew, located in Russian-occupied Donbas.

The Soviet-designed weapon cannot distinguish between military and civilian aircraft. Ukrainian intelligence intercepts of Russian-separatist chatter indicated they were expecting to shoot down an An-26 Ukrainian military transport plane when MH17 appeared in the skies over the areas they held. Based on the positioning of the Buk under the An-26's expected flight path, and the near immediate social media post by Russian separatist leader Igor Girkin, rejoicing at the downing of the aircraft, it appears the shootdown was a horrendous mistake.

Russia took no responsibility and instead blamed Kyiv. It has since changed its version of events at least five times, but with each of them being promptly debunked both by experts and Bellingcat, a United Kingdom-based group of citizen journalists.

Becoming an outcast (at least in the West) is much less than Putin deserves. As the man ultimately responsible for those 298 deaths, the Kremlin leader should eventually face a United Nations tribunal for his crimes. But he won't. Russia is a permanent member of the U.N. Security Council and can veto the measure.

And instead of admitting guilt, Russia has plowed on with its offensive, taking almost 10 percent of Ukraine's territory and brazenly ignoring commitments it made under the Minsk II peace agreement in February. Moscow has even had the chutzpah to impose its own economic sanctions on Ukraine and the European Union, and to blacklist Western officials.

Putin's multi-faceted belligerence didn't stop there.

He has continued to deny that Russia is a party to the war it has instigated, engineered and commanded since it annexed Crimea and invaded the Donbas last spring. More than 6,700 people have been killed and 2.2 million people displaced from their homes, most resettling in Ukraine and the rest abroad, according to data provided by the United Nations.

Billions of dollars of infrastructure, industry and homes have been destroyed by the modern Russian weaponry, logistics and manpower Russia has deployed in eastern Ukraine.

A year on from MH17, the free world must unite and put a stop to the Kremlin dictator and stop denying that the conflict in Ukraine is merely a local affair.

Because if Putin is not stopped, it won't be just random air passengers who fall victim to the Kremlin's warmongering. The security of Europe is at stake.

Rule of lawless

Ukraine can expect to see more gangland-style clashes, like the one that took place in the western city of Mukacheve on July 11, if the government keeps allowing corruption to flourish and armed volunteer units to roam free. Two members of the Right Sector nationalist group were killed in a shootout with local police; the Right Sector said a private security guard of a parliamentarian was also killed.

The altercation was over a turf war for control of smuggling channels in which local law enforcement were involved, according to the Security Service of Ukraine, or SBU.

The SBU is searching for six Right Sector members involved in the shootout who hid in the Carpathian Mountains as this edition of the Kyiv Post went to print.

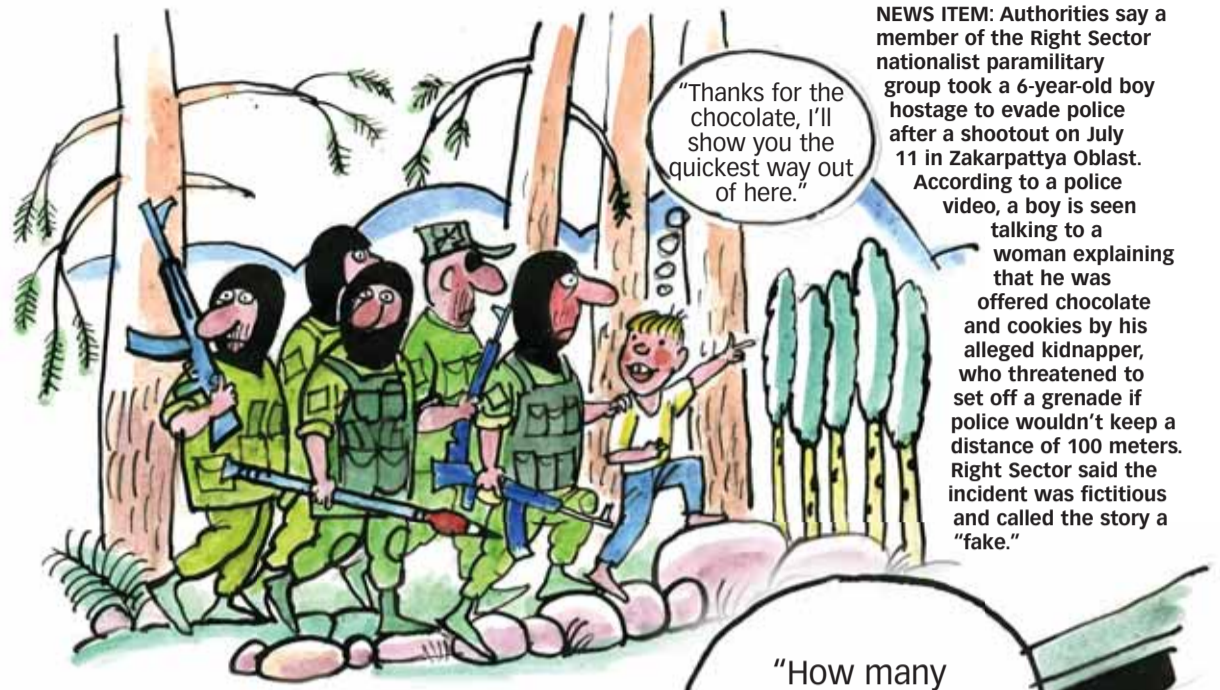
To bring order to the oblast, which borders four European Union countries, President Petro Poroshenko appointed proven troubleshooter Hennadiy Moskal as governor. Foul-mouthed in his straight-forward management style, Moskal served Kyiv well as governor of embattled Luhansk Oblast.

That's not enough. The police need to be made accountable and given pay raises to discourage them from taking bribes. Let's not forget that it was the breakdown of law enforcement that allowed the Russian-separatist forces last year to take over key government buildings in the Donbas.

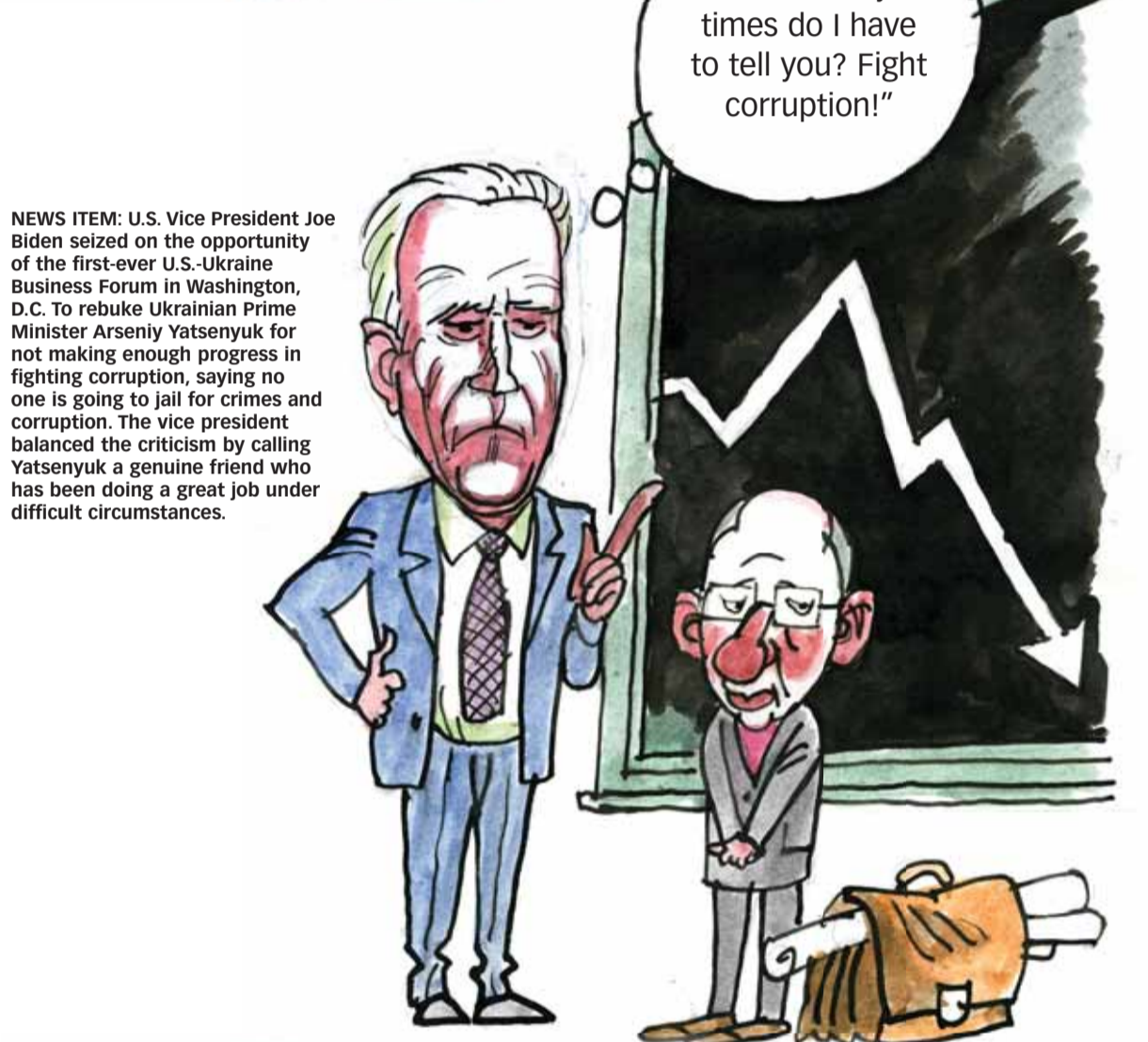
Local governments should set economic policy and improve the welfare of their residents — otherwise smuggling will still be seen as the only way to make a living.

And the remaining volunteer battalions like OUN and Right Sector, for all their heroism fighting Russian-separatists, should finally be made subordinate to the overall military and law enforcement system. The armed nationalists had no business brandishing heavy machine guns more than 1,000 kilometers from the war front. If they did uncover smuggling, they should've gone to the authorities in Kyiv or their leader, Dmytro Yarosh, who is a member of parliament.

Now they face charges of being part of a criminal organization, instead of being remembered for defending Ukraine's territorial integrity from Russian aggression.



NEWS ITEM: Authorities say a member of the Right Sector nationalist paramilitary group took a 6-year-old boy hostage to evade police after a shootout on July 11 in Zakarpattia Oblast. According to a police video, a boy is seen talking to a woman explaining that he was offered chocolate and cookies by his alleged kidnapper, who threatened to set off a grenade if police wouldn't keep a distance of 100 meters. Right Sector said the incident was fictitious and called the story a "fake."



NEWS ITEM: U.S. Vice President Joe Biden seized on the opportunity of the first-ever U.S.-Ukraine Business Forum in Washington, D.C. To rebuke Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk for not making enough progress in fighting corruption, saying no one is going to jail for crimes and corruption. The vice president balanced the criticism by calling Yatsenyuk a genuine friend who has been doing a great job under difficult circumstances.



NEWS ITEM: Members of a pro-Kremlin youth group from the Buryatia republic in Russia denied that people from the region have fought in Ukraine's Donbas, according to a video they released on July 13. Their presence at the battle of Debaltsevo as part of a frontline tank brigade was documented by Russian and Western media. In the video, the speakers invite Ukrainians to their homeland to "discover Brtyatia," while professing their love for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

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US Vice President Joe Biden gives the closing speech of the U.S.-Ukraine Business Forum at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce on July 13 in Washington, DC. (AFP)



Biden: Ukraine needs 'to put people in jail'



BRIAN BONNER
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WASHINGTON, D.C. — After listening to several speeches during the U.S.-Ukraine Business Forum on July 13 in America's capital, I thought I would be writing another column about soaring rhetoric and lack of substance between the two friendly but not particularly close nations.

After all, the event started with Tom Donahue, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (which co-hosted the event with the U.S. Commerce Department), saying: "This is a time of great promise for *the Ukraine*." When people who know Ukraine listen to a speaker putting the article "the" before Ukraine, they know they are hearing from someone who doesn't know much about the nation.

But then U.S. Vice President Joseph Biden came along to save the day and steal the show.

He started slow. He seemed to be ad-libbing. If he was, the reason, as some in the crowd said later, was that his teleprompter wasn't working properly during the first moments of his speech.

He more than made up for it with his impassioned criticism of Russia's war against Ukraine and, the real headline-grabber of the event: His scolding of Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk and Ukraine's government for failing to curb corruption and oligarchs, punish criminals and put people in jail.

By the end of the speech, Biden brought into focus the order of America's priorities in Ukraine, and they're pretty good: First, the welfare of the Ukrainian people; second, encouragement of the new batch of young, reformist ministers; and third (or even lower), Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk.

Some of the great quotes:

- "This may be the last genuine opportunity the people of Ukraine have to establish a democratic republic that is economically prosperous."
- "It's profoundly in the self-interest of the United States to see Ukraine emerge as prosperous, democratic, independent and reform-oriented."

- "The changes being enacted now have to be real and lasting. They cannot just be reforms on paper."
- "Above all, Ukraine needs to confront the corruption that has stopped this country from reaching its potential."
- "Corruption siphons away resources, destroys trust in government, hollows out the military. It's an affront to the dignity of the people of Ukraine. As Ukrainians know in their bones, it's not enough to talk about change, we have to deliver change. You have to deliver change."
- "Ukraine has a strategy and new laws to fight corruption. Now you've got to put people in jail."
- "You have to...investigate and prosecute corruption, past and present...at all levels...get rid of monopolistic behavior that has characterized the country for so long...get rid of sweetheart deals."
- "Keep listening to your people. Make sure your work remains transparent and make sure civil society has a voice in this process."
- "This is it Mr. prime minister. The next couple of years, the next couple months will go a long way to telling the tale."

The stirring speech contrasted with what almost everybody I talked with considered to be Yatsenyuk's two lackluster performances that day at the conference, the first filled with platitudes and generalities and the second one so short that it put the event 20 minutes or more ahead of schedule before Biden arrived. Some thought Yatsenyuk squandered a big chance to sell Ukraine to new investors. I am not sure about that point. While the event organizers didn't release the participant list, many of the 150 attendees are familiar faces in Kyiv, not new ones.

I also thought about criticizing U.S. President Barack Obama as a no-show. The host U.S. Chamber of Commerce is right across the street from the White House. And, according to Obama's public schedule, he wasn't having a busy day. At 10 a.m., he got the daily briefing, then delivered remarks at the White House Conference on Aging, then had lunch with Biden. That was about it, according to the White House website.

This seemed to be more evidence that Ukraine was a second-tier concern to Obama. But the Obama-Biden team had other plans. They teamed up in a

meeting with Yatsenyuk and some of his aides, joined also by U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Geoffrey R. Pyatt. People who have talked to the participants say that, while expressing strong support for Ukrainians and Ukraine, the president and vice president said they were fed up with inaction on corruption and that future U.S. aid would be in jeopardy if faster progress wasn't made. "It was a pretty rough meeting at the White House," one conference attendee told me.

Judging from Biden's public speech, I believe this version of events — that the private remarks must have been at least as blunt.

President Petro Poroshenko and Yatsenyuk have not put an end to Ukraine's crony capitalism. They've made little headway in making the criminal justice system work properly, in changing the Sovietized and bureaucratic civil service and in ending favors to oligarchs and insiders.

Yatsenyuk compounded his own weak performance this week by complaining publicly that European Union member nation Greece is getting more than \$300 billion in bailout loans while loan commitments to Ukraine are generously estimated at \$40 billion.

Given the poor performance to date of the Poroshenko-Yatsenyuk team in delivering on the promises of the EuroMaidan Revolution that ousted President Viktor Yanukovich last year, it is more understandable why the West is rationing aid and putting heavy conditions on it.

Even though the Kyiv Post has editorialized in favor of the West sending arms to Ukraine, a better approach may be for the West to help finance Ukraine's own domestic weapons production.

But before any significant financing or investment comes, the West needs to be satisfied that Ukraine's leaders are not corrupt and that they will punish crime — that the weapons won't get sold on the black market, that those who stole billions of dollars will be punished and that those who murdered will also go to prison.

This is simply not happening in Ukraine. And until it does, the frustration will only deepen until the day comes when the nation's political leaders find they have few friends in the West and among the Ukrainian people.

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VOX
populi

WITH VALERIYA
GOLOVINA



What do you think happened in Mukacheve (where a shootout took place on July 11 between paramilitary group Right Sector and the police)?



Natalia Dmitrieva,
volunteer
at the Kryla Feniksa (Wings of the Phoenix) organization
"The conflict in Mukacheve reflects the

current situation in Ukraine between the government and the people. I know directly from the Right Sector that if it were not for them, we wouldn't be in Pisky [in Donetsk Oblast] and all the positions we hold. They are patriots."



Hennadiy Lisytskiy,
pensioner
"In Zakarpatya the people in power crossed the line. Firstly, I don't know what role Right Sector

is playing in this scenario. Was this the real Right Sector? Secondly, the fact that they used weapons is unacceptable."



Natalia Litviniuk,
banker
"It's outrageous. Everyone remembers the horrible bandits in the 1990s, but they're still

here today. I can't accept what the Right Sector is doing. [They should] join the military and fight there. Right Sector was acting in their personal interests."



Roman Bilyk,
soundman
"Zakarpatya always was a corrupt region due to its access to four bordering countries; people always

profited from the customs controls. This is due to the incompetence of the Right Sector, who decided to tackle smuggling on their own. If they really had evidence about smuggling groups and corruption, why didn't they agree with Kyiv?"



Yuliya Matvienko,
financier
"It doesn't matter who started to shoot first, but Right Sector didn't have the

right to be there in any case. They shouldn't have weapons. The law is the law, and whether you are from Right Sector or just a citizen, you should obey it — especially when we're at war."

Horizon's stake in Rozetka could be Ukraine's biggest e-commerce deal

BY ALYONA ZHUK
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Ukraine-based private equity fund manager Horizon Capital has announced it made an investment in Ukraine's biggest online retailer Rozetka, although neither side has yet revealed the details of the deal.

Still, investment experts and other players in Ukraine's e-commerce industry agree – the news is a signal that Ukraine remains attractive to big investors, despite Russia's war in eastern Ukraine.

Rozetka, "led by visionary entrepreneurs, Vladyslav and Iryna Chechotkin, is the undisputed market leader in the fast-growing Ukrainian e-commerce segment. (The company) has superior brand recognition, top quality service and high customer satisfaction levels," Horizon Capital's press service said in a statement published on July 15.

Rozetka has nearly 40 percent of online home appliances and electronics market, according to Ukrainian Association of Direct Marketing. The value of the deal between Horizon Capital and Rozetka has not been disclosed, but experts agreed it was big for Ukraine.

According to Denis Dovgopoliy, managing partner of the business accelerator GrowthUP, various investors he has talked to in last three years have evaluated the net worth of Rozetka at between \$200 million and \$700 million. Dovgopoliy himself reckons the company is worth between



Shoppers near the entrance to the box store of online retailer Rozetka in Kyiv July 15. Private equity fund Horizon Capital announced on July 15 that it acquired a stake in the nation's largest online retailer in a deal that analysts valued at \$30-\$50 million. (Anastasia Vlasova)

\$200 million and \$400 million.

He said funds like Horizon Capital would try to get a 5-20 percent share in a company, for \$10-100 million.

"I think the value of the deal lies between \$30 million and \$50 million," Dovgopoliy told the Kyiv Post.

Mykola Palienko, CEO of another

big Ukrainian retailer Prom.ua, told the Kyiv Post that the investment in Rozetka could be from \$50 million up to \$200 million.

"It could be one of the biggest deals in Ukrainian e-commerce ever," Palienko said. He said this was good news not only for Rozetka, but also for the whole e-commerce industry, since it could encourage other investment funds to eye Ukraine.

Horizon Capital CEO Lenna Koszarny said in a statement that the investment was very important for the equity fund, and that it "clearly demonstrates our commitment to, and belief in, the strong upside potential of Ukraine."

Dimitri Lisitski, the CEO of online marketplace All.biz in Ukraine, said the deal would add value across the entire Ukrainian e-commerce industry. "All Ukrainian e-commerce projects have gotten more expensive today [July 13, the day the deal was announced]," he said.

"This is important, [because] Horizon is a big investor – it's been on Ukrainian market for many years and it understands what's going on here," Lisitski told the Kyiv Post. "Apparently, it has high expectations about the macroeconomic indicators of the country – Rozetka can't be successful if the entire country is in crisis."

Horizon Capital manages three funds with total capital of more than \$600 million. The funding for the Rozetka deal is to come from Horizon Capital's Emerging Europe Growth Fund II (EEGF II).

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War brings big uncertainty to class of 2015

BY SANDRA MACKENZIE
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"Where do you see yourself in five years' time?"

It's a common job interview question, but for this summer's graduates, it's far from easy to predict even one year in the future. The class of 2015 began their university studies with Viktor Yanukovich as the president of Ukraine, Crimea as a top domestic vacation spot, and preparations well underway for the 2012 European soccer championship that the nation co-hosted.

But the world they are entering as graduates now looks very different, with war raging in the east of Ukraine and the country's economy in shambles.

Bloomberg economists have predicted that Ukraine will be the global economy's "biggest loser" by year-end. Ukrainian graduates of both international and national universities are facing the daunting challenge of trying to balance helping their country in a time of need with finding steady employment that covers essential costs.

Kateryna Busol has just graduated with a PhD in International Law, and currently works at the Museum of National Art of Ukraine. Describing her search for meaningful employment, she says, "it's difficult not only in terms of payment, but also in having this desire to help your country and then finding that your country doesn't really need you and your help."

She specializes in human rights law,

a field which she says remains undeveloped in Ukraine, with most work still handled by nongovernmental organizations. Like many of her contemporaries, she provides free legal advice both privately and to NGOs to help with the war effort. She consulted the Ministry of Culture regarding the status and management of Ukrainian cultural property in occupied Crimea, but has to balance her pro bono work with paid employment.

"In a way, the state is spoiled, because they can say 'Payment? No, we have a crisis and you should help for free,'" Busol told the Kyiv Post.

"And okay, I'm ready to do that – but I can't work 24 hours a day for no money. It's impossible," she said.

Eugen Shevchuk says studying abroad was the best experience he has had. He'll receive a master's degree in management from Cambridge University this summer and realistically assesses how hard it will be to fulfill the high expectations he has.

"Maybe you can earn lots of money, but you're working in an office doing things that aren't meaningful," he says. "Or you can go and work for the government and try to make an impact, but your chances of making this impact are really low, and your salary is even worse."

Ukraine's students served as a major catalyst for the EuroMaidan Revolution just over a year ago, but that will to transform the country is hard to maintain in the face of a shrinking economy and limited opportunities.

The instability in Ukraine further-



Mariia Terentieva (L) and friends graduate from the Institute of Journalism at Taras Shevchenko National University on July 3 in Kyiv. (Roman Yeremenko)

more has also limited options for education and employment overseas.

Mariia Terentieva, who has just graduated from the Institute of Journalism at Shevchenko University, says, "I am from Luhansk and I want this war to end so badly. That is why I initiated research on information warfare between Russia and Ukraine. So many people in the Donbas believe nobody, including their own government."

Her research proposal on the subject gained her a place on a masters' course at Cambridge University, but she's struggling to secure the funding she needs.

"Studying information warfare is very important to develop recommen-

dations for the Ukrainian Ministry of Information," she says. "It could help to end this war sooner and save so many lives."

Demyd Maiornykov, international officer for the National Students' Union of Ukraine (NSU), says that maintaining momentum is a key focus for the organization. His experience with the post-Maidan government has given him hope for lasting reforms.

"There are a lot of things changing in Ukraine, and that includes education," he says. "As representatives of all students of Ukraine, we can suggest ideas and the Ministry of Education will review them."

The NSU also received the educa-

tion ministry's support to track the experiences of internally displaced students. It's of particular significance for Maiornykov, who began the academic year at Donbas State Technical University but had to leave for the safety of Lviv Polytechnic University mid-way through a term.

Given the upheaval of the past 24 months, it's understandable that this year's crop of graduates is unwilling to make too many predictions about their future.

"A year ago I would say that I never will move abroad for work, but now it is difficult to say," says Terentieva. "I definitely would like to live and work in Ukraine. In five years' time, I will be 28 and most probably be on maternity leave."

For Shevchuk, "the best case scenario would be to balance private practice in law, and academia."

"Academia here would be just for pleasure, though, not for money, because you can't make money working in Ukrainian universities."

Busol, who also looks forward to having a child, still hopes her work will make a difference in Ukraine.

"I hope to be a mother, in five years or ten, and to be satisfied with what I'm doing in terms of my profession," says Busol. "I don't believe that I'll be cloudlessly happy, but if I can do something important in this field in my legal job, which will change my country for the better, I'll be really glad."

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Lviv developer Nravo adds free-to-play children's games to its product line

BY BOZHENA SHEREMETA
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Four years ago Lviv-based mobile game developer Nravo made only adult games. But that changed when company CEO Andriy Tabachyn and his wife Natalia Tabachyn became parents, and last summer Nravo decided to add children's games to its product line.

Separately called Nravo Kids, the non-profit group employs six developers and designers, and has so far produced three mobile games for kids aged 2-4.

The free games — "Who's in the

Mountains?"; "Vsyaka Muzyaka" (Various Music) and "Svit Dobra" (The Good World) — are available on Windows Phone, Android and Apple's iOS.

"Who's in the Mountains?" is available in English, Russian and Ukrainian, while "Vsyaka Muzyaka" and "Svit Dobra" are available in Ukrainian only. Combined, the three games have been downloaded about 30,000 times.

"The Ukrainian mobile game market hardly has any educational games that are professionally drawn, designed and voiced," said Natalia Tabachyn, head of the Nravo Kids project. "So Nravo Kids

started from our own need [as parents] to have games that would entertain our kids and also teach them basic skills, like counting and reading."

"Mouse Alphabet" and "Talking ABC" are the main competitors of Nravo Kids, Tabachyn said. They are also well designed and available in Ukrainian and English.

In existence for a year, Nravo Kids has had \$100,000 invested around in it so far. Microsoft Ukraine partly funded "Svit Dobra" while "Who's in the Mountains?" and "Vsyaka Muzyaka" were funded by Nravo.

"Last autumn Microsoft representatives came to us with an offer to create a mobile game, where kids must do good deeds and help game characters, kids from orphanages or kids with disabilities, to complete the game blocks," Tabachyn said.

Parents who play the game with their kids can donate money to charities through the game after each completed stage, when users are given the chance to donate to various causes.

Since the games are free, the non-profit seeks other fundraising avenues.

"We have low purchasing power in Ukraine, which is the number one barrier. While regular gamers can and are willing to pay for games, kids cannot. And parents are not yet used to buying mobile games for kids. They would rather spend Hr 50-100 on a regular book in a book store," Tabachyn said.

For this reason Nravo also plans to sell physical games and activities.



A boy learns how to play "Vsyaka Muzyaka," a karaoke game based on Ukrainian folk songs, at an event in Lviv that brings together mothers and their children for interactive activities on May 30. (Courtesy)

Nravo Kids' games

Game	Price	Compatibility	Description
Who's in the Mountains?	Free	iOS, Android, Windows Phone	This game takes the user on a journey with Grandpa John and his farm animals to the Carpathian Mountains. It teaches animals' names and sounds, improves counting skills, and develops logical thinking.
Vsyaka Muzyaka	Free	Android	Karaoke game. Famous Ukrainian folk songs are sung by Andriy Kuzmenko (the late lead singer of Ukrainian band Skryabin). Every song provides a game set with animated characters and simple tasks to complete.
The Good World	Free	iOS, Android, Windows Phone	Kids are offered different settings where they can help game characters, also kids, in different situations. After each completed stage of the game, an option of making a donation is provided, so that parents can donate money to charity funds linked to the game.

Lviv-based Nravo Kids develops free mobile games for children aged 2-4 years.

Source: nravokids.com

The first product is a coloring book. It includes "Who's in the Mountains?" game characters and can be ordered from Nravo for Hr 150 or at online book stores and at box stores in Lviv.

Apart from the three kids' games, Nravo has developed 19 games since 2010, when the company was founded. Over 20 million gamers worldwide now play the company's range of games, forming the company's main revenue source.

Anna Kosaryeva, a marketing specialist from Lviv's IT school and a mother of two, says her kids don't go anywhere without their iPads and Nravo's games are their favorite ones.

Kosaryeva said she was ready to pay several dollars for a game that could entertain and educate her children simultaneously.

"What I like about Nravo is that their games have offline analogs, so that kids are not always using their gadgets," Kosaryeva said. "[But] when they are sick or I need to occupy their attention, Nravo's games are a good solution for me, because I know that they are great entertainers."

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Advertisement

Turkish business community in Ukraine gathered at Ramazan dinner



TUID President Cem Murat Aytac makes his welcome speech

The traditional Ramazan dinner of the International Turkish Ukrainian Businessmen Association (TUID) was conducted in Kyiv on July 6 with the participation of the Ambassador of the Turkish Republic in Ukraine HE Yönet Can Tezel and over 200 guests.

The event was sponsored by Colin's, one of the top international clothing retail companies, operating 80 stores and employing over 1,000 employees in Ukraine.

In his welcome speech, TUID Vice Chairman Burak Pehlivan welcomed participants, mentioned that Ramazan dinner is the most important of over 30 yearly events organized by TUID, and explained Ramazan dinner's special meaning and importance in Turkish culture.

Later TUID chairman Cem Murat Aytac opened his speech with underlying that TUID member base represents over 90% of Turkish capital in Ukraine. He commented "we are proud



TUID President Cem Murat Aytac together with Turkish Ambassador to Ukraine HE Yönet Can Tezel, Commercial Attache Belkis Gürsel Güleç and Tourism and Culture Attache Berat Yıldız



Kyiv Post's Brian Bonner and Alyona Nevmerzhytska

of having a very large member base, from huge holding companies to private entrepreneurs, with representatives from different businesses, nationalities, scales and geographies over Ukraine... as a good sign of our embracing, uniting and participative approach, today 200 businessmen and guests have found the opportunity to come here this evening. Despite all the difficulties in 2015, we continue to preserve our unity and solidar-

ity. We can overcome obstacles and problems by protecting our values".

The Ambassador of the Turkish Republic in Ukraine HE Yönet Can Tezel said that he was pleasantly surprised to observe such a large, dynamic and diverse event with participation of distinguished Ukrainian, Turkish and International business communities, and was happy to participate to such a spectacular event.

Dinner lasted until late evening in Kyiv Mangal Restaurant.



Business Ukraine's chief editor Peter Dickinson with Colin's management team

State, carriers seek pact on river transportation system

BY ILYA TIMTCHENKO
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The golden age of Kyivan Rus saw a bustling trade route running along the Dnipro River, carrying honey, grain and furs to Greek colonial trade outposts along the Black Sea coast. In exchange, traders in Kyiv and elsewhere received silks, naval equipment, wine, jewelry, and, after the introduction of Orthodox Christianity in 988, icons.

But today only 3 percent at most of all freight in Ukraine is transported via rivers. Mainly because of bureaucratic barriers and inefficient regulation, the nation's 2,100-kilometer river transportation system remains undervalued, neglected and underutilized.

To reverse this trend, the Infrastructure Ministry wants to simplify the river transportation system to bolster competition, and take some weight off Ukraine's crumbling roads. Some 22 percent of freight gets shipped on roads, according to the State Statistics Service.

Infrastructure Minister Andriy Pyvovarsky is seeking, via legislation, to slash "many taxes that are collected right now" while introducing an additional tax that will "go toward deepening the [Dnipro] River bed to make the river more competitive, according to a July 10 briefing he gave in Kyiv.

The ministry's vision is to create a single tax that will go to "one pocket" which can be easily monitored on how it collects and spends money. Collected taxes currently go to the general state budget.

"This is an ideal solution for solving

the problem of deepening the river bed," Pyvovarsky said.

Meanwhile, private shipping companies are asking the government not to go ahead with an additional excise tax that it is proposing.

But the new measure is necessary, according to the Infrastructure Ministry, because there are no public funds available to support the industry.

"Over the last 20 years the river [transportation] market has not been given the needed attention of government officials... we are all unified around the idea of getting rid of artificial barriers for its development," said Yuriy Vaskov, Ukraine's deputy minister of infrastructure, at an American Chamber of Commerce in Ukraine roundtable discussion about the proposed measure on June 8.

Last year the volume of river freight transportation grew by 25 percent, totaling 5.1 million tonnes compared to 2013, EY, a leading audit and research company, reported. In terms of waterways, some 97 percent of freight is carried by sea, totaling 148 million tonnes.

Supporting open ports for foreign flags and getting rid of port entrance fees are some of the changes companies and today's government agree on.

Businesses see flaws in the proposed law, however.

Based on various measurements, such as distance travelled and freight load, the tax will bypass state coffers and go directly to the newly formed state Administration of Internal Water Channels.

Upgrades to river routes could also stumble if the excise tax gets lev-



Kyiv's river port located in the capital's Podil district on July 15. Many of Ukraine's river ports are in poor condition because investors are scared off by highly bureaucratic procedures. (Anastasia Vlasova)

ied, according to the Ukrainian Grain Association.

The non-profit industry group, which conducts river shipping, said in a June 10 news release that the decision is not economically sound and differs from global practice.

"The tax proposed by the ministry, will lead toward transportation cost increases and will kill river transportation," said Yuriy Skichko, the director

of Hermes-Trading, a grain production company.

In general, the state should create incentives for companies to invest and then step aside unless it's a national security issue, Yuriy Vakhel, a lawyer specializing in the agricultural sector, said.

Freeing up the system will create fewer opportunities for official bribe taking, he said.

"An excise tax on fuel is a more efficient taxation model. This can be implemented for ships as well as for railways and trucks."

Fuel spent on water transportation is substantially cheaper than its substitutes. River transportation is twice as cheap compared to railway transportation and four times cheaper than road haulage, Pavlenko said.

Artem Skorobogatov of Interlegal, a law firm that specializes in shipping services, said the excise tax should be reviewed very carefully.

"When the river [starts to be] heavily used, such a payment would certainly have its place," he said. "But during the development stage, when there are no favorable shipping conditions or an appropriate fleet, any additional load on companies has to be analyzed."

Today, the Infrastructure Ministry manually processes many orders," Hermes-Trading's Skichko said. This creates opportunity for corruption and makes it impossible to do long-term planning, which ultimately creates an unattractive investment environment, he added.

Last year, Skichko's company transported about 14,000 tonnes via five barges, whereas the rest of their freight had to be transported via rail because of high water transportation taxes. This is strongly hitting his business, he said.

But Skichko said one quick way to deregulate is to allow ships with foreign flags to come into Ukraine's river ports without paying the requisite fees, such as for canal locks and bridge opening fees.

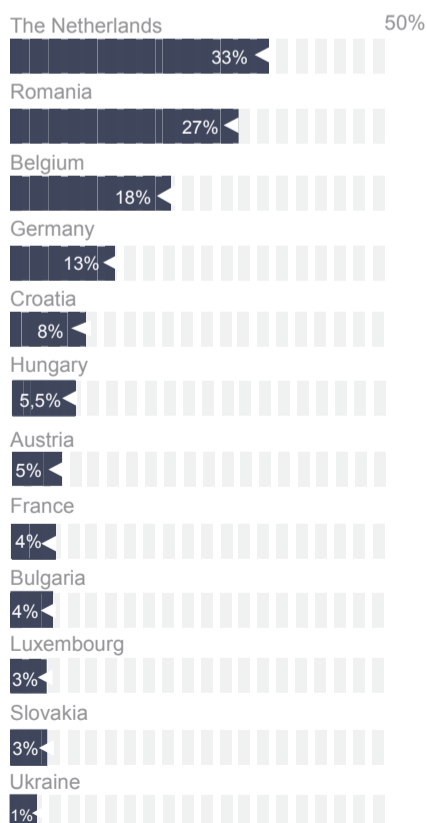
This is the only remaining question regarding the river transportation reforms, said minister Pivovarskiy. A final decision of the proposed tax should be made on July 20. The ministry is still deciding the amount of the tax, how to implement and administer it. Once consensus is reached, a final decision will be taken.

But it will still be up to the Parliament to approve the decision and bring it into practice, Pivovarskiy said.

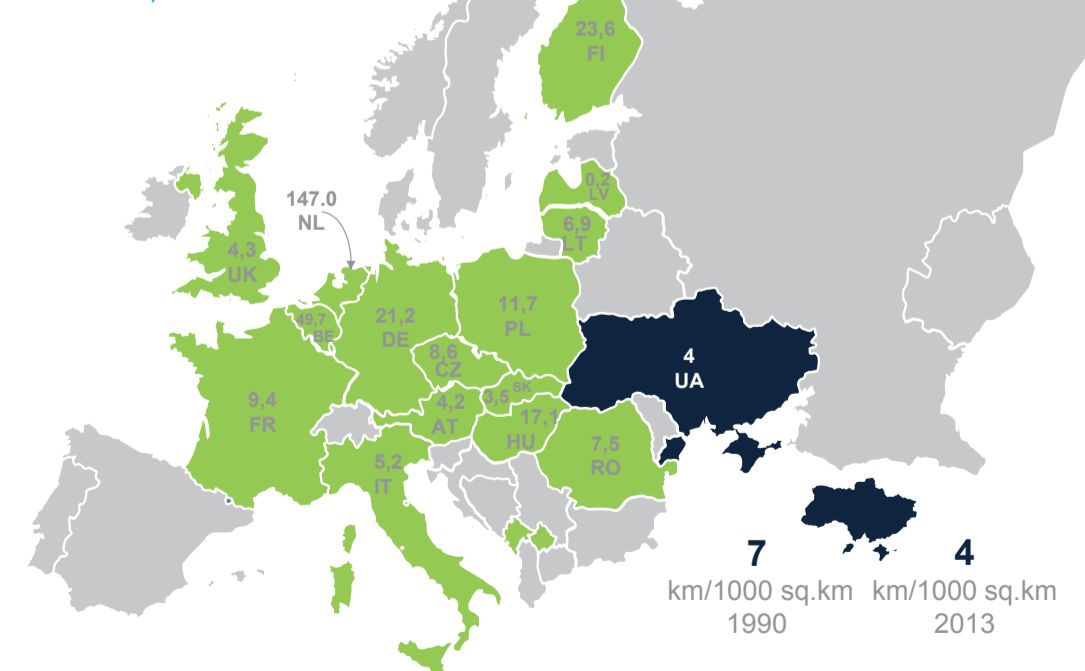
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Ukraine's river transport potential

Share of river transport in EU, %



Density of navigable river waterways, km/1000 sq.km as of 2013



An independent member of Baker Tilly International

Source: State Statistic Service of Ukraine

Ukraine's river infrastructure is heavily undervalued though it could serve as an effective alternative to railways and highways. In some European countries rivers are responsible for 13-27 percent of freight transportation, whereas in Ukraine it is only 1 percent.

Reform Watch

Editor's Note: The Kyiv Post tracks the progress made by Ukraine's post-EuroMaidan Revolution leaders in making structural changes in the public interest in six key areas: economy & finance, security & defense, energy, rule of law, public administration and land. The following measures were in focus on July 9 - 16.

Overview

The U.S.-Ukraine Business Forum in Washington, D.C. made it clear that the time for flattering words about the Ukrainian government's reform drive had run out. If Ukraine doesn't tackle corruption, the flow of foreign investment to fuel economic growth will dry up.

"This is it, Mr. prime minister," U.S. Vice President Joe Biden told Arseniy Yatsenyuk during his closing speech on July 13. "Success in Ukraine will tell the story about what Europe will look like in the next 10 or 15 years."

Only investors can bring prosperity to a state, not soldiers or activists, Biden warned.

"Any experiment in democratization not followed by economic growth has failed in the last 100 years," he said.

1 Economy & finance

Parliament on July 16 approved four laws required by the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Japan and Germany to unlock a total of \$3.2 billion in credit. The laws raise utility tariffs to cost-recovery levels and provide firmer guarantees for bank deposits.

Finance Minister Natalie Jaresko on July 15 held talks in Washington, D.C. with Ukraine's creditors' committee to reach a deal on the restructuring of sovereign Eurobonds. The talks took place against the backdrop of a looming \$120 million coupon payment expected from Ukraine on July 24. A joint statement issued after the talks mentioned "narrowing the gaps," but gave no specifics.



Minister of Justice Pavlo Petrenko (L) and Vitaliy Shabunin of the Anti-Corruption Action Center, a watchdog organization, work together to lobby a law that discloses real estate and vehicle ownership by officials. On July 13, the two symbolically uncovered a luxurious car parked in front of parliament wrapped in an oversized income tax declaration. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

In other comments, Jaresko said she expected the government to cut the public sector deficit to 3.7 percent of gross domestic product in 2016, down from 4.2 percent in 2015 and 4.6 percent the previous year.

And in an effort to widen the tax base for the cash-strapped country, Jaresko said Ukraine and Cyprus would agree on measures to end the widespread practice of using the Mediterranean island as a tax haven.

2 Rule of law

On July 14, the legislature improved an important anti-corruption bill, making data on the ownership of land plots,

residential property and vehicles accessible to the public. The law makes it easier to track whether officials have a lifestyle not compatible with their income level – an indication of possible corruption. "Unjust enrichment and the registration of property to third parties becomes impossible under the new law," Yegor Sobolev, chairman of the parliament's anti-corruption committee, said on July 14.

The Ministry of Justice launched an extended version of the online registry on corrupt officials, with searches by name, post, sentence, and the date and number of court rulings now available.

While not directly affecting

Ukraine's relationship with Western donors, these initiatives were closely watched by the West, and came in unison with the law on local elections (see below), and were indicative of the overall pace of reforms, Dragon Capital said in a commentary.

In order to refresh the ranks of discredited prosecutors, Deputy Prosecutor General Davit Sakvarelidze on July 16 invited anyone with a degree in law to apply for one of 700 positions.

3 Security & defense

This week's visit by a NATO delegation will result in the approval of a joint project in the near future to rebuild Ukraine's navy, the Defense Ministry said in a July 15 statement.

Lawmakers helped the Defense Ministry save Hr 228 million on public procurement, People's Front lawmaker Tetyana Chornovol said on July 14. Parliament and the ministry had jointly managed to break up one corrupt scheme, end one monopoly, and attract new bidders.

National Security chief Oleksandr Turchynov said front line fortifications would be completed by July 15. Turchynov said he believed "the defenses now set up will be able to stop not only Russian terrorist groups but also regular army forces of the Russian Federation."

As of July 9, more than 26,000 of Ukrainian citizens had electronically registered for permits to cross the demarcation line in the east, according

to SBU security service spokeswoman Olena Hitlyanska.

4 Public administration

On July 16 parliament approved changes to the constitution giving more powers to regional and local governments as foreseen by the Minsk II peace agreement. (See article on decentralization bill on page 3).

Parliament on July 14 adopted a new set of rules for the local elections scheduled for October 25 (please see article on page 3).

5 Energy

To boost the domestic gas extraction and decrease energy dependence on imports from Russia, Finance Minister Natalie Jaresko on July 13 proposed that parliament decrease two-tier royalty taxes from 55 percent and 29 percent, to 29 percent and 14 percent. If adopted, the lower royalty rates will apply to high-cost gas production from wells with depths of more than 5,000 meters.

Parliament on July 15 ratified a loan agreement with the European Investment Bank for a €150 million credit line to upgrade the nation's vast Soviet-era gas pipeline system. Under the agreement, which was signed in December last year, another institutional investor, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, will fund the rest of the €355 million project.

By Johannes Wamberg Andersen and Mariana Antonovych

"BEST OF KYIV" AWARDS

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A year on, Russia obvious culprit in MH17 downing

→ 1 kilometer from the Russian border, to Luhansk on July 17. The team comprises investigators appointed by the Australian, Belgian, Malaysian, Dutch and Ukrainian authorities.

On the day of the shootdown, July 17, the Buk moved through the cities of Donetsk, Zuhres, Shakhtarsk and Torez to Snizhne in Donetsk Oblast, according to both video and photo evidence collected by Bellingcat and one of the versions of events being considered by the joint investigation team. The missile that shot down the plane was launched from an area south of Snizhne, according to Bellingcat, and the debris from the destroyed aircraft fell to the ground near the village of Hrabove northwest of Snizhne.

Immediately after the crash, Russian separatist Igor Strelkov's Bulletin, a major separatist account on Russia's Vkontakte social network, said that Kremlin-backed forces had shot down a Ukrainian An-26 transport plane. The entry was swiftly deleted.

Since no such plane was shot down, analysts concluded that separatists had apparently mistaken the Malaysian Airlines plane for an An-26.

The same Buk system that shot down the plane was transported to Luhansk closer to the Russian border and was filmed there on July 18, according to the joint investigation team and Bellingcat. On the same day, the Buk crossed the border with Russia, according to an intercepted call between Kremlin-backed militants released by the joint investigation team in March.

Subsequently a convoy with missile loaders was filmed in Russia's Belgorod Oblast on July 19-20. It contained at least one missile loader from the June convoy that transported the Buk to the Ukrainian border, Bellingcat concluded.

The movement of the sophisticated missile system from Donetsk to Snizhne to Luhansk was also con-



Mourners place flowers and light candles in front of the Netherlands Embassy in Kyiv on July 18, 2014, a day after all 298 people on board Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 were killed when the aircraft was shot down over Russian-occupied Donetsk Oblast. (Pavlo Podufalov)

firmed by an intercepted conversation published by the SBU last July and eyewitnesses interviewed by De Volkskrant, a Dutch newspaper, in May and Russia's Novaya Gazeta in July.

Bellingcat's founder Eliot Higgins told the Kyiv Post that the Buk missile's crew was highly likely to be Russian.

"Why would we think that they drove a missile launcher up to the border, handed over the keys to some local farmers in Ukraine who drove it and shot down MH17, especially when it's a complicated missile system?" he said.

Higgins said that Bellingcat could release the names of the people involved but did not want "to publish anything that damages the police investigation." The names could, however, be published in August, he said.

According to calls intercepted by the SBU, people involved in the missile system's transportation include Oleg Bugrov, chief of staff of Luhansk-based separatist forces; and an officer of Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) Andrey (second name unknown)

with the nom-de-guerre Orion. Other people implicated are Sergei Petrovsky, with the nom-de-guerre Khmury, a GRU officer and a deputy of Igor Girkin, a separatist leader and ex-officer of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB); Buryat, a separatist fighter, and Botsman, a GRU officer, according to the SBU.

And according to an intercepted call published by the joint investigation team, a man with the nom-de-guerre Bibliotekar was also involved. Another person allegedly implicated in the scheme is someone who goes by the nom-de-guerre Gyrza, who has been identified by separatists as a Russian intelligence officer, according to sources cited by Novaya Gazeta in July.

In the face of the evidence provided by the joint investigative team, Western media, Bellingcat and numerous bloggers, Russia has produced a number of conflicting theories that blame Ukraine for the crash. Much of the evidence provided by Russia has since proved to be false by Bellingcat and even some Russian experts.

On July 21, 2014, Russia's Defense Ministry held a press conference intended to prove that the plane had been shot down by either a Ukrainian Buk missile or a Ukrainian plane.

Bellingcat later conducted an error-level analysis of the images provided by Russia's Defense Ministry and concluded that they had been falsified.

In November 2014, Russia's state-controlled Channel One broadcast an image allegedly showing a Ukrainian plane shooting down the Boeing. That image was later proved to be a crude fake.

Then in June 2015, Russian state-owned arms producer Almaz-Antei claimed that at the time of the crash Russia no longer possessed Buk M-1 systems with 9M38M1 missiles. However, Bellingcat later provided numerous recent images of such equipment in Russia.

Another debunked Russian theory is that a Ukrainian Buk missile launched from the village of Zaroshchenske south of Shakhtarsk allegedly shot down the plane.

Last month the Netherlands sent a draft of its report due in October to Malaysia, Ukraine, Russia, the United States, the U.K. and Australia. Russia's Air Transport Agency said, "we have nothing to hide," regarding MH17, but has refused to answer questions until the final Dutch report is published.

Kremlin likely to sabotage efforts to criminally prosecute in MH17 case

BY OLEG SUKHOV
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Countries affected by the tragic downing Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 on July 17, 2014, are weighing their legal options to bring those responsible to justice.

There is a broad array of strategies available, but Russia, itself a prime suspect, opposes the creation of a U.N. tribunal to prosecute the culprits.

Australia, Belgium, Malaysia, the Netherlands and Ukraine have asked the U.N. Security Council to set up the tribunal. If established, it will have a right to request evidence from any country, including Russia, and summon witnesses from there.

But Russia has veto power as a permanent member of the Security Council. Meanwhile, Wim de Bruin, a spokesman for the Dutch chief prosecutor's office, told U.K. newspaper The Telegraph on July 16 that the current Dutch criminal investigation would definitely yield "charges of murder and possibly charges of war crimes."

Based on its law on international crimes, the Netherlands can prosecute any individual who commits a war crime against a Dutch citizen.

Apart from criminal trials, the suspects could face civil litigation.

A writ was filed in Chicago on July 15 accusing Russian separatist leader Igor Girkin, who is also an ex-officer of Russia's Federal Security Service, of orchestrating the MH17 crash. The families of 18 passengers who were aboard the plane are claiming a total of \$900 million in damages, according to the writ.

Even if the suspects are found guilty, implementing rulings will be difficult.

Only a U.N. Security Council tribunal is able to demand anything from Russia, Serhiy Petukhov, an advisor to Ukraine's justice minister, told the Kyiv Post.

"If it turns out that the Buk missile was launched by Russians based in Russia, you won't be able to get access to the suspects [for testimony]," he said. "And your entire investigation will be halted because it's a criminal tribunal, and guilt must be proven."

Buk is powerful, flawed weapon

BY EUAN MACDONALD
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The sophisticated, Soviet-designed Buk air-defense system is so powerful that it remains to this day one of the most deadly in its class.

A typical Buk battery consists of several modules: A command post vehicle, a target acquisition radar (TAR) vehicle, six transporter erector launcher and radar (TELAR) vehicles, and a missile loader vehicle equipped with a crane.

Although the TAR vehicle can be used in combination with the TELAR vehicles to track and attack multiple targets, each TELAR is also equipped with its own radar system and is capable of operating independently. A TELAR can begin tracking a target once it comes within the maximum range of its missiles (around 32 kilometers, or 20 miles) and can track aircraft flying as low as 15 meters (50 feet) or as high as 22 kilometers (72,000 feet).

Although sophisticated in terms of design, the Buk TELAR system, in the hands of a well-trained crew (of four) has a relatively simple user interface, according to aviation expert Michael Pietrucha, interviewed by MIT Technology Review on July 18, 2014. It takes only five minutes to set up the system in a firing position, or to stand the system down for movement to another position.

But because of a serious flaw in the targeting system, a single Buk TELAR working without backup – even with a fully trained-up crew – could still down a commercial airliner by mistake, Pietrucha told the Review.

If operating alone, as the TELAR vehicle that probably downed flight MH17 is suspected to have been, its crew would have been unable to identify a commercial airliner by its transponder signal alone, Pietrucha said. Since both military and commercial aircraft often use the same transponder modes, these signals are not used by the Buk's targeting system for aircraft identification. In fact, the system would have to be hooked in to a national air traffic control system to be able to discriminate between a commercial aircraft and a potential military threat.

Operating covertly and alone from a field south of Snizhne in east Ukraine on July 17 last year, the single Buk TELAR, even with its powerful onboard radar, was almost certainly blind to the identity of the aircraft at which it launched a missile.

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A Buk surface-to-air missile system fires a rocket into the air. (Courtesy)



The allegedly Russia-supplied Buk missile system left Kursk in Russia on June 23, 2014 and reached the launch site in Ukraine on July 17, 2014. Source: Bellingcat

CNN reported on July 16, citing a source who had seen the report, that it says the plane was shot down by a Russian Buk missile from separatist-controlled territory.

The second report, prepared by the joint investigation team, will identify those responsible for the crash.

Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak said earlier in July that the criminal investigation would continue until the end of 2016.

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Social media trail points to Russian culpability for MH17 shootdown

BY ALLISON QUINN

In the aftermath of the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, in which all 298 people on board were killed on July 17, 2014, Ukraine and Western nations pointed the finger at Russian-separatist forces in eastern Donbas. Russia blamed the Ukrainian military. With little other information to go on, social media provided the bulk of the clues for what really happened. Bellingcat, a U.K.-based citizen journalism project, has released a series of social media postings made prior to, during and immediately after the tragedy. Most of the statements support the theory that the civilian airliner was brought down by Kremlin-backed separatists.

Social media posts from residents of Donetsk and Shakhtarsk prior to the crash suggest a missile launcher was transported out of the city by Moscow-backed separatists that morning.

Twitter user @666_mancer: 10:13am

"Donetsk 25-30 minutes ago around the Georgia area something that looks like a Smerch was seen. It was sitting there. But maybe they are going to transport it..."

Twitter user @Buzzing_Rook: 12:32pm

"In the morning people were writing that it [a Buk] was on Shkhtostroiteley Boulevard by Ilych Avenue headed in the direction of Makeevka."

Twitter user @spice4Russia: 12:51 pm

"Shakhtersk kamaz of terrorists, 3 tanks. Before them possibly a Buk passed by, covered up"

Residents of Torez and Snizhne reported seeing the rocket launcher pass them an hour before the plane was shot out of the sky.

Twitter user @WowihaY: 12:07pm

"An air defense installation just passed us in the direction of the city center. 4 rockets, they say that it's a Buk #stopterror #torez in the direction of #snizhne"

Twitter user @MOR2537: 12:10pm

"They hauled a rocket complex on a low-loader escorted by two vehicles through Torez towards Snizhne at 12:10pm"

The sound of the explosion was announced by residents on Twitter. The plane crashed at 4:20pm local time.

Twitter user @other331: 4:25 pm

"Something just made a loud as hell sound from the direction of Shakhtarsk"

Twitter user @NikolasFather: 4:28 pm

"No, it was between Shakhtarsk and Torez, closer to Torez and further north. Sounded like a Grad volley (if it is that, then where is it firing to?)"

Twitter user @other331: 4:35 pm

"At first it was a single explosion that wasn't too strong, and then after a minute a second stronger one thundered."

Twitter user @HuSnizhne: 4:25 pm

"Snizhne: a plane flew by and then a bang. Either it bombed something or it crashed."

Other residents, some of whom

openly supported the separatists, said they had seen a rocket launched into the sky.

Sergei Petrov, a Snizhne resident without any political affiliations, wrote on his Vkontakte account that he'd witnessed an explosion.

5:03pm: "Vlad, I also didn't immediately realize. I saw that something was flying. I was out in the country in a tree and picking peaches. And then an explosion. There was an extremely strong sound...I would have captured it on my phone (((but people did capture the end"

Danil Radyukov, a local man who supports separatists, posted on Vkontakte at 7:08:

"I saw how this rocket flew!!! I even saw where it came from and where it went!!! It was terrible as hell to see it!!!!"

Irina Shcherbakova, a local Snizhne woman who supports the separatists, saw a rocket launch before the downing of MH17:

7:42: "I saw how a rocket flew from the direction of Saurovka... and then a minute-long lull and a loud explosion...a trail remained in the sky from the rocket...I didn't see the explosion myself it was very loud...I don't know who to believe but we didn't hear the sound of an SU[-25]...it was quiet just like with a normal passenger plane and then that's all..."

A Vkontakte group run by fans of then-separatist commander Russian citizen Igor Strelkov offered the most damning evidence of separatist involvement, though it was deleted once it became known that it was not a military plane but a civilian airliner that was downed.

Posted at 5:50 Moscow time, the message read:

"In the area of Torez an AN-26 plane was just shot down, it is somewhere near the mine 'Progress'."

We warned them - do not fly in "our skies."

And here is video proof of yet another "falling bird."

And there is also information about a second shot down plane, likely a SU[-25]"

In its investigation, Bellingcat notes that while these social media posts cannot be considered a smoking gun of separatist involvement, the eyewitness accounts of residents do match the narrative widely accepted by the international community that Moscow-backed separatists accidentally shot down the plane.

"A Buk anti-aircraft system was located in Donetsk in the late morning, headed east through Shakhtarsk, moved through Torez at around 12:10 (p.m.), and left through Snizhne later that afternoon. A rocket was fired—both seen and heard from locals who were supporters of separatist forces—from south of Snizhne immediately before the downing of MH17," the Bellingcat report concluded.

This report includes only some of the social media postings found by Bellingcat. A full round-up of the social media posts can be found at www.kyivpost.com.

Staff writer Allison Quinn can be reached at a.caseyquinn@gmail.com.



Servicemen stand next to burnt cars in Mukacheve in westernmost Zakarpattya Oblast on July 11, 2015 where two people were killed and several more wounded in a shootout that day between police and heavily armed members of the nationalist Right Sector movement. (AFP)

Right Sector's Yarosh: Ukraine's laws 'don't work in Mukacheve'

→1 Local prosecutors blamed the Right Sector, saying their armed members shot first at police, using grenade launchers and then automatic rifles.

The Security Service of Ukraine, or SBU, has promised an investigation into the incident, and member of parliament Mykhaylo Lanyo, who the Right Sector implicated in smuggling, has been called in for questioning. Lanyo is a former member of ousted President Viktor Yanukovich's Party of Regions.

The fact that the incident occurred hundreds of kilometers from the war front serves as a fearsome reminder that while Ukraine is battling Russia in the east, it still has to contend with rising anger amid lagging reforms and entrenched fiefdoms of corruption.

Besides Right Sector, there's plenty of other disgruntled citizens out there.

"Even if Right Sector is disbanded and declared a forbidden paramilitary group, there will be others doing the same thing they did. It will happen in other regions as well, because people want justice and the government hasn't been giving it to them," Podgorna said.

Independent lawmaker Borislav Bereza agreed.

Unless the government "takes control of the flow of arms and the situation with contraband and begins to really rid itself of Yanukovich's legacy, distrust of the authorities will grow into another uprising that neither the government nor Ukraine will survive," Bereza told the Kyiv Post.

The public's distrust of the authorities was quite clear in the wake of the Mukacheve battle, with support for Right Sector dominating social media.

While Russian media portrayed Right Sector as monsters and played up the incident as proof that "neo-Nazis" are running Ukraine, many ordinary Ukrainians responded by asking why they should trust a law enforcement system that is rife with corruption and ineffectiveness in punishing crime.

Podgorna said that while Right Sector may not be widely popular, the "overwhelming majority" of citizens would back their calls for rooting out corruption.

Soldiers from other battalions were quicker to condemn the authorities than Right Sector for the shootout.

"The authorities have not lived up to their promises, and they have maxed out all the public's trust - that's a fact," said Maksym, a volunteer with the Donbas Battalion who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the press.

"It seems more likely that Right Sector was set up in this incident. We've lost all patience with the authorities and are fed up with their promises," Maksym said.

Oleksiy, another volunteer with the Donbas Battalion, said he believed the incident in Mukacheve was part of the government's bid to get rid of volunteer fighters.

"Right Sector was in the trenches from the very beginning, they shouldn't just be shut out," Oleksiy said, adding that while some Right Sector members might be up to no good "they shouldn't all be seen as bad."

The government has sought to bring all volunteer battalions under either the control of the Defense or Interior Ministry. The Right Sector has been central to those plans, with the Defense Ministry announcing in April that its leader, member of parliament Dmytro Yarosh, would be an adviser to Army General Staff commander.

But the group has still been defiant of the authorities on more than one occasion, and Yarosh, in the aftermath of Mukacheve, said Right Sector had taken matters into their own hands because "the laws of Ukraine don't work in Mukacheve."

Yarosh's lack of faith in the government that he is part of is a common sentiment among soldiers on the front line.

Podgorna said it is not limited to them. "This situation threatens the government even more than the paramilitaries do," she said.

"The conflict in Mukacheve is a strong signal [of the need] to completely overhaul the entire system, because it doesn't meet the needs of Ukrainian society," she said, noting that the government had not yet kept its promises

to meet demands made by the public during the EuroMaidan Revolution.

The government has "had a year-and-a-half now, but they've made only imitation or cosmetic reforms," she said.

One of those demands was to remove corrupt officials in power, yet the public continues to see such officials let out on bail or flee the country to evade justice. Just last week, two high-ranking officials in the Prosecutor General's Office accused of a massive extortion scheme were offered bail, and one of them was released. Days later, a court in Kyiv Oblast acquitted a former university president accused of swindling taxpayers out of millions of hryvnia. The move prompted appeals to Poroshenko to intervene.

"When there's a war going on and many citizens have arms, then of course this is the response (that the government) will get to injustice," Podgorna said, adding that the Mukacheve conflict was a result of "clans left over from the post-Soviet system" and Yanukovich era officials being allowed to do as they please.

Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, during his visit to Washington, D.C., on July 13, said the Mukacheve fight was about "corruption and smuggling" and not the Right Sector. Podgorna said his comments were "populist politics" seekign to appease the public rather than make any real change.

Political analyst Taras Berezovets of Berta Communications said the conflict in Mukacheve could have been avoided if the authorities had removed certain officials from power in 2014. "What happened there is a very dangerous indicator for the authorities," he said. "That this shootout could just happen [shows there] was a loss of control by the local police and governor. It's bad news for the government."

"I don't think there will be a third Maidan [revolution], but if there is, they aren't going to stand around in lines for weeks like last time - they will just take up arms and seize government buildings," Berezovets said.

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Browsing artwork in Kyiv's upscale hotels

City Life

WITH YULIANA ROMANYSHYN
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Now is time for boat trips to explore Kyiv's Dnipro River, Desna River

The Dnipro River used to be a main waterway for public transport and freight. Today, the public transport role is going through hard times, and operates only locally within Kyiv city limits and its suburbs.

Nevertheless, diesel-powered motor vessels leave from Kyiv's river port offering trips that feature panoramic views of the ancient city. Passing under the bridge over the Dnipro, cruising past the Percherska Lavra and Vydubychi monasteries and Trukhaniv Island, these trips usually take an hour or 90 minutes, and cost Hr 100 and Hr 120, respectively.

Where and when: Ships leave port daily from the 7th and 8th piers at Naberezhno-Khreshchatytska Street near Poshtova metro station. 10 a.m. – 7 p.m.

A two-hour upstream cruise passing Kyiv's outskirts as far as the mouth of the River Desna costs Hr 100. A bar onboard serves drinks and snacks.

If there's more time to spare, take a Desna River trip with a picnic for Hr 200. The fare includes a round trip to Velyky Island, but it doesn't include any meals. Instead, bring a picnic basket and blanket and relax for a while on the island's beach, where one can also play football or basketball, and roast meat on a grill.

Another route past the mouth of the Desna goes to the Kyiv reservoir, built for the hydroelectric power plant near the village of Vyshhorod. This four-hour cruise takes you through the shipping lock to the reservoir and back to the pier for Hr 250.

Where and when: Trip to Desna River – on weekends and holidays from the 7th pier. Noon, 5 p.m. Trip to Kyiv reservoir – on weekends and holidays from the 7th pier. 1 p.m., 3 p.m.

To view fugitive ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's former opulent country estate, Kyivrichflot shipping company offers a seven-hour cruise to Mezhyhirya for Hr 300. Leaving past Kyiv's Podil and Obolon districts, and the village of Vyshgorod, the ship then enters the Kyiv reservoir to reach the residence known as Mezhyhirya. The entrance fee of Hr 50 lets visitors see all the sights on the 140-hectare complex complete with lakes, a waterfall, golf course, and yacht pier. For an additional charge one can visit the retro car exhibition, the zoo with its now-famous ostriches, the so-called Putin House, and a spa complex. Guests can rent a bike to peddle around the sights for Hr 50 per hour.

The most impressive building, the Honka, where Yanukovich resided, will shock visitors with its crass opulence, but the tasteless furniture and decorations will take more than an hour to fully take in, and it costs an extra Hr 200 fee.

Where and when: On weekends and holidays from the 7th pier. 10 a.m.



A wall-size painting in the swimming pool of Premier Palace hotel depicts Kupala Night, a Slavic celebration of ancient pagan origin marking the end of the summer solstice, painted by Ukrainian artist Henri Yagodkin. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

BY YULIANA ROMANYSHYN
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People don't choose a hotel based on the artwork in the lobby.

But once there, the choice of art inside hotels can enhance the stay for guests and visitors alike.

The Kyiv Post took a tour of some of the capital's leading hotels to explore the paintings, sculptures, photos and other artworks on display.

Radisson Blu

International chain Radisson Blu has two hotels in Kyiv's downtown. Despite sharing the same brand, they have dis-

tinct decors. The older Radisson Blu on Yaroslaviv Val Street was built in 2005 and maintains the atmosphere of that era. Original paintings, reproductions and photos are divided by themes such as, Italian, Scandinavian and marine.

Italian Carlo Borlenghi's pictures taken of yachts in stormy seas, reproductions of paintings by French artist Andre Brasilier and photographs by Martin Hill from New Zealand embellish the hotel's corridors and rooms.

The walls in the lobby of the newer Radisson Blu Podil on Bratska Street feature large black and white pictures including historical shots of famous Kyiv landmarks such as the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, Opera House and numerous bridges over the Dnipro River.

InterContinental

The InterContinental hotel pays a lot of attention to the beauty of its rich interior, opening a gallery in its lobby to promote modern art. The lobby exhibits paintings in bright abstract styles by Ukrainian Oleksandr Klymenko, photography and paintings from French artist Alain Rodier, paintings of jazz performances by Viacheslav Breish, and amber jewelry and sculptures by Iryna Karpova.

Corridors are decorated with retro-

spective photos of the Ukrainian capital, taken around 50 years ago. "These items are not for sale, because this is primarily an exhibition of Ukrainian art," says Illia Kmetiuk, a public relations manager at the InterContinental.

Premier Palace

Premier Palace displays 273 original art works on its walls. The hotel exhibits its paintings from Ukrainian Sergiy Shyshko, city and nature landscapes from Matvii Kohan-Shats, and lyrical landscapes by Ivan Hovorostetskyi. According to the hotel's brand manager Oksana Tolkachova, paintings aren't changed often.

→ 13

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Volunteer group provides Kyiv women with safe escorts at night

BY NATALIYA TRACH
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A volunteer group in Kyiv – Brat za Sestru (A Brother for a Sister) – has been set up to provide free security escorts for unaccompanied women traveling home late from work.

Group organizer Olena Yushchenko says its goal is to protect women from robbers and rapists on Kyiv's streets late in the evenings.

"Many girls and women who return home late from work or study are under continual risk of becoming the victims of assault, so our aim is to protect them," Yushchenko says.

The initiative started three months ago, and more than 10 women have already asked for help. Anastasiya Lytvynenko, 25, an economist from Kyiv, was one of them. Two months ago she came across the organization's page in the Vkontakte social network, although she never thought she might need their help.

But nearly two weeks ago, a drunk man attempted to harass Lytvynenko on a street early in the morning. She managed to escape, but was shocked by the incident and feared it might happen again when she came home at 10 p.m. that day. With none of her friends in town that day to see her safely home, Lytvynenko sent an application to the security escort group's social media page to get a male volunteer to safely escort her home. Within two hours the young woman received the number of a volunteer, who met and escorted her right to her doorstep.

"I wasn't sure I'd made the right decision by contacting Brat za Sestru until I saw the volunteer. He was a well-mannered young gentleman who has a black belt in karate," Lytvynenko said.

Yushchenko says all their volunteers go through a rigid selection process. Besides passport data verification, the male volunteers must be physically fit and be between 16 and 40 years old. "We choose young physically strong men who are able to protect a woman in any circumstances," Yushchenko says.

Inappropriate behavior by the male escorts is unacceptable, organizers say.

"The guys are not allowed to enter the girls' apartments, and they can only date a woman if they are off-duty," Yushchenko says, adding that it is

strictly prohibited for escorts to receive any payment from the women they protect.

In the three months since the group was founded, nearly 50 male volunteers from all over Kyiv have stepped up to help unaccompanied women reach home safely. Yushchenko uses mostly social networks to find volunteers. At first it was not an easy task. Many of the men were suspicious and didn't trust her initiative, Yushchenko says.

But Mykola Buhayov, a 19-year-old student in Kyiv, who practices the martial art of aikido, did not hesitate when two months ago he received a Vkontakte message from Yushchenko with an offer to join the volunteer initiative. "I always accompany my older sister late at night. Many girls don't have brothers or husbands who can see them home, which is why I became a Brat za Sestru volunteer," Buhayov says.

Now more men are sending their applications to Brat za Sestru's Facebook or Vkontakte pages, Yushchenko says, adding that over the past week nearly 15 new male volunteers have signed up.

The volunteers all speak English, so foreign women are also welcome to use the service if they need it, Yushchenko says. Organizers also have plans to visit local sport clubs to recruit more male volunteers.

Yushchenko got the idea from activists in St. Petersburg, Russia. Similar volunteer organizations have existed in other big Russian cities for the past two years. In Ukraine, activists from Cherkasy, Brovary, and Bila Tserkva also plan to organize similar security escorts for women in their home towns.

"Many men in Ukraine are ready to protect women from thugs for free," Yushchenko says.

Lytvynenko says that next time she needs to be accompanied home, she will try to arrange it with her friends. "But now I can rely on Brat za Sestru volunteers, because I know they won't let me down," she adds.

Women who need help and men who want to join the initiative can send their applications to:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/bzs.kyiv/> or https://vk.com/brat_za_sestru_kyiv

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



Olesya Galik-Dvorak's "Twins in the Boat" sculpture beautifies the lobby of Opera Hotel. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

Kyiv's hotels showcase work of Ukrainian, foreign artists

→12 The largest wall-size picture by Henri Yagodkin looks out over the swimming pool and features a mystic celebration of Kupala Night, a holiday with pagan origins.

All the paintings are the property of the hotel and cannot be bought, according to Tolkachova. "Only a few large museums can boast such a heritage," she says.

Hilton

The Hilton hotel prefers to exhibit photos. Kyiv streetscapes adorn five floors, with the snapshots having been taken especially for Hilton by Ihor Karpenko.

The hotel lobby also serves as a showroom for paintings from the Mironova Gallery. The works of two Ukrainian artists are currently on display – bright, abstract paintings from artist, photographer and filmmaker Tanya Voitovych, and a consummate flower composition from Petro Bevza, who has enjoyed success in the U.S., Canada, France, and the U.K.

"We carefully ensure that the works we select organically match the interiors of our partners," director of Mironova Gallery Anastasia Platonova says.

Hyatt Regency

One more lodging exhibiting paintings



"Silver Rain," a plastic sculpture by Antony Rotar, decorates the lobby of Hyatt Regency hotel. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)

from the Mironova Gallery is the five-star Hyatt hotel. Three paintings symbolizing femininity currently decorate the lobby.

Designers also hung artworks by Yuri Solomko in the hotel's more high-end guest rooms. Solomko paints people embedded in old and contemporary maps of Ukraine and the world.

Opera Hotel

Opera Hotel purchased its paintings, mirrors, sculptures, and clocks in the Four Seasons Ramesh Gallery in Dubai, creating a boutique atmo-

sphere in the lobby, restaurant, and guest rooms. Antiques adorn the lobby, including handmade Ukrainian painted ceramic sculptures.

"Tree of Life" and "Twins in the Boat" sculptures combine natural materials and painted ceramics by Uzhgorod-born artist Olesya Galik-Dvorak. She prices her wooden composition "Tree of Life" at Hr 35,000 which can be bought in the hotel.

Kyiv Post staff writer Yuliana Romanishyn can be reached at romanyshyn@kyivpost.com.

Advertisement

3G?.. More 3G!



3mob.ua

A new stage of 3G networks era in Ukraine began in February 2015. However, a few people paid attention to the fact that the services of these technologies had been available in Ukraine for a long time — since 2007 the company TriMob provides this service to Ukrainians, having covered more than 1 000 localities in few years.

TriMob proposes for the business subscribers the subscription cost from 15 UAH with traffic included from 300 MB (up to unlimited). Regular subscribers can use bundles which cost from 50 UAH with included traffic from 3 GB. The voice traffic to TriMob's subscribers is included into all tariff plans.

The greatest values to users are the packages that allow subscribers to order the unlimited access to high-speed mobile Internet for a day per 16 UAH. A distinctive feature is the absence of data speed limitation regardless of the consumed traffic volume.

Mobile broadband telecom market segment will meet the needs of people of Ukraine in quick access to information and will help to create an open democratic society.



Mykola Buhayov, 19, a volunteer at Brat za Sestru (A Brother for a Sister), accompanies a woman safely to her residence at night in Kyiv on July 14. (Konstantyn Chernichkin)



July 18- 9

Live Sound International rock festival

Twenty eight rock bands from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Belarus and Ukraine hit the stage in Kyiv during a two-day fest. Lords of the Sound, Kozak System, Foxthroat, Closterkeller, and an AC/DC tribute by DC-Train are the headliners. Further entertainment comes with bike and laser shows.

Live Sound international rock festival. July 18 – 19. Noon – 10 p.m. Lyodovy Stadium. (9 Akademika Hlushko St.). Hr 170 – 260

July 18- 9



Street food festival

Grilled meat and fish dishes, piquant seafood, various desserts and lots of salads await food lovers at the 12th street food festival in Kyiv which promotes healthy food and lifestyles. Activities include volleyball, bubble football and fitness workouts.

12th Street Food Festival. July 18 – 19. 11 a.m. – 11 p.m. Platforma Art Space (1 Bilomorska St.). Hr 25

July 16 – Sept. 19



(Andriy Sanytsakov)

Break Your Chains photo exhibition

The show's photos portray the life of disabled people and the obstacles they face in carrying out their daily routine. It presents people with disabilities who strive to lead meaningful and successful lives in Ukraine.

Break Your Chains Photo Exhibition. July 16 – Sept 19. 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. Kyiv History Museum. (7 Bohdana Khmelnytskoho St.). Hr 30



(Courtesy)

July 21 - 28

LifeStyle Danish film festival

The LifeStyle film festival program presents six notable Danish movies that received awards at different European and Asian film festivals. Most of the movies are dramas, thrillers or melodramas. They are screened in the original language with English and Ukrainian subtitles.

LifeStyle Danish film festival. July 21 – 28. 7 p.m. Kyiv Cinema (19 Velyka Vasylykivska St.). Hr 40, 50

June 28



(KyivNightRun.com)

Kyiv Night Run

Runners of the city's first night race are offered two distances – five and 10 kilometers. Ukrainian DJs will entertain spectators and runners with electronic music mixes.

Samsung Galaxy S6 Night Run. July 25. 4 p.m. – midnight. Palats Sportu metro station (1 Sportyvna St.). Hr 350

July 20



Baroque organ music concert

Classical music lovers might not want to miss the baroque music concert at the Kyiv organ music hall. The playbill features masterpieces by Jean-Baptiste Lully, Henry Purcell, Johann Sebastian Bach and Claude Balbastre.

Baroque organ music concert. July 20. 7:30 p.m. National Organ and Chamber Music Hall of Ukraine. (77 Velyka Vasylykivska St.). Hr 40 – 140



Kyiv Post is looking for a senior business executive, who will lead the publication's business strategy and digital transformation going forward.

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Financial Markets International, Inc. (FMI) is seeking a qualified professionals to fill the following short-term positions for **USAID Financial Sector Development Program (FINREP-II)**

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The Expert will collaborate with FINREP-II's International Financial Literacy Experts on development of the Deposit Guarantee Fund's financial literacy program for adults.

SHORT-TERM COPYWRITER/EDITOR

The Copywriter/Editor will edit, rewrite and proofread the text of materials of the two modules of the Deposit Guarantee Fund's financial literacy program for adults.

Candidates for both positions should be available to start work immediately.

For detailed job descriptions and qualifications required, please visit FINREP-II employment section at www.finrep.kiev.ua/structure/job_en.php.

Candidates are asked to submit resumes and cover letters to: office@finrep.kiev.ua indicating the position title in the subject line by July 26, 2015. Only finalists will be contacted. No telephone inquiries please.



JOB OFFER

The German Embassy in Kyiv is currently accepting applications for the vacancy listed below:

www.kiew.diplo.de/Vertretung/kiew/de/08/Ausschreibung_Kultur.html

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Vacancy: Administrator
Organisation: The HALO Trust
Field of Work: Humanitarian Mine Action
Location: Based in Kyiv but will involve travel within Ukraine and abroad
Website: www.halotrust.org

HALO is a large international NGO specialising in the clearance of the hazardous debris of war. HALO is establishing offices in Ukraine and is seeking to recruit an administrator to support the growth of a new project. Responsibilities include, as a minimum: handling basic finances, translation of documents, managing the import of equipment and obtaining work permits for international staff. The successful applicant will be an enthusiastic self-starter and problem solver, and interested in working as part of a dynamic and committed team. Benefits include: competitive salary, overseas travel and opportunity for career development within HALO.

Requirements

- Education: University graduate — BA/BSc
- Languages: Fluent in Ukrainian, English and Russian
- IT: High level of competency in MS Office; GIS/database experience desirable, but not essential
- Travel: passport holder and able to spend up to three weeks abroad at a time on training courses
- Other: driving licence desirable

To Apply: Please send a one page CV and covering letter to ukraine.recruitment@halotrust.org and put "Administrator" in the subject header.

The deadline for applications is Friday, July 31st. Short-listed candidates will be invited for interview.

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At least 2,233 soldiers killed in Russia's war against Ukraine

BY OLENA GONCHAROVA
GONCHAROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Eight Ukrainian soldiers were killed and 16 wounded on July 14-15 in Donetsk Oblast, as authorities said Russian-separatist attacks intensified in the past week in war-torn Donbas.

Russian-separatist forces opened fire on Ukrainian positions more than 100 times on July 14, according to the Ukrainian army. Hotspots included areas near occupied Horlivka and the ruins at Donetsk airport, according to Presidential Administration spokesman Oleksandr Motuzyanyk.

Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council said that the previous 24 hours marked "the most intense bombardments of Ukrainian territory since the signing of the Minsk (peace agreement) in February.

The Kyiv Post estimates that at least 2,233 soldiers have been killed since mid-April 2014, based on official reports, local media sources and information from relatives. More than 6,700 people have been killed and 1.4 million displaced in the Russia-instigated war, according to the United Nations.

Read the full story at www.kyivpost.com

Casualties mount in Russia's war against Ukraine (through July 15)

Civilians killed	4,531
Civilians wounded	10,068
Soldiers killed	2,233
Soldiers wounded	6,820
Displaced people from Donetsk, Luhansk oblasts and Crimea	1,381,953

Sources: Ukrainian Health Ministry, Defense Ministry Medical Service, Defense Ministry, United Nations, anti-terrorist operation spokesman Andriy Lysenko, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Russian human rights activist Elena Vasileva



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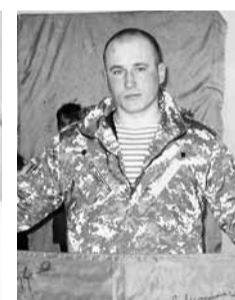
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Parliament gives more self-rule to regional, local governments

→ 3 15, according to deputy parliamentary speaker Oksana Syroyid.

Pro-presidential lawmakers subsequently started a campaign to ensure that the decentralization law contained nothing that would finally determine the status of two problematic regions.

A day before voting, the following constitutional provision was included: "The particularities of self-governance in certain regions of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts will be envisaged by the law."

Theoretically, the "law" leaves the door wide open for any provisions that lawmakers choose.

Some lawmakers tried calming fears referring to a law that was passed on the status of Donetsk and Luhansk on Sept. 16. First Deputy Chairman of the Bloc of Petro Poroshenko faction, Ihor Kononeko, and pro-presidential lawmaker Volodymyr Ariev,

reminded lawmakers of the specific measure.

It gives local authorities, for a period of three years, immunity from criminal persecution, the right to choose an official language, and the right to form local courts, prosecutor offices, and police units.

However, the law was never enforced, said Ariev. "And it will not be enforced while these territories are occupied," he said.

Some lawmakers said they had been pressured to vote for the decentralization law.

Syroyid of the Samopomich party wrote on her Facebook page on July 15 that members of parliament were under extreme pressure from the international community to give the occupied territories "special status in our constitution."

The main reason for this, according

to Syroyid, is that the international community wants to transform Russia's war against Ukraine into a local conflict. She said they're tired of the war, but such "pressure is a denial of Ukraine's right to self-determination."

People's Front lawmaker Leonid Yemets was more circumspect, saying "it depends on what you understand by 'under pressure.'"

"I was invited to a meeting with Victoria Nuland (on July 15), at which we discussed all these issues – the U.S. position and the upcoming parliamentary vote... (Nuland) insisted (the law, including its new amendments), had to be approved," Yemets told Ukrainian online newspaper *Ukrainska Pravda* on July 16.

Nuland met with all the parliamentary faction during her visit.

"She presented her arguments, and we presented ours," Yemets said. "We

explained the logic of the Minsk agreements: first – the end of hostilities, the removal of artillery, the exchange of hostages, and only then elections and constitutional amendments."

In the end, it fell to Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to ensure the bill gets past the first stage of the legislative process. Appearing in parliament on July 16, Poroshenko called on lawmakers to approve the bill, while denying that they had been under any kind of outside pressure.

"Ukraine was, is, and will remain a unitary state," Poroshenko said. "The bill does not envisage a special status for Donbas – only a special status of local self-governance in the Donbas."

While he said that Ukraine's "U.S. and European partners show justified interest in the stabilization of situation in the east," he called upon parliament

"not to leave Ukraine facing the aggressor (alone)."

"I understand how difficult it is to vote for such a provision. It will be difficult to sign it as well, but we have to do it for Ukraine. We have to get used to taking uncomfortable decisions, and taking responsibility... Otherwise, Ukraine will pay dearly," he told lawmakers.

Meantime, Denys Pushilin, head of the Supreme Council of the Donetsk People's Republic said both the law on local elections and decentralization reform have nothing to do with self-proclaimed republic. "They are off the Minsk process and have nothing to do with us," Pushilin said.

"The local elections in DNR will take place as promised on Oct. 18," he said. *Kyiv Post's legal affairs reporter Mariana Antonovych can be reached at antonovych@kyivpost.com.*