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## Two more probes launched into events in Southeastern Ukraine



The RF Investigative Committee's Head Office has opened two more criminal investigations into the events that are taking place in Southeastern Ukraine.

According to investigators, the commander of the 14<sup>th</sup> separate mechanized brigade of the Ukraine's Armed Forces Colonel Aleksandr Zhakun in April 2016, organized a heavy-artillery shelling of Yelenovka checkpoint of the Donetsk People's Republic meant for civilian people and vehicles. 4 people were killed, another 7 were wounded and 4 vehicles were damaged in the shelling. Investigators believe that the Colonel's actions contain signs of a crime under Part 1 of Article 356 of the RF Penal Code (use of prohibited means and methods of warfare).

An investigation has also been opened into the genocide of Russian-speaking people, including children who lived in the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. Both former and current officials of the Ukraine's Defense Ministry and National Guard are under investigation, including the Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak, Head of the General Staff of the Defense Ministry Viktor Muzhenko, former commander of the Land Forces Anatoly Pushnyakov, current commander of the

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Land Forces Sergei Popko, Commander of the National Guard Yuri Allerov. According to investigators, from January to August 2016, all of them gave criminal orders to their subordinates in the Ukraine's Armed Forces and National Guard to use heavy weapons to destroy civil infrastructure and settlements in the Donetsk People's Republic and to completely or partially annihilate the Russian-speaking group of people including children. At least 9 people were killed and at least 110 people were wounded, including 9 minors, at least 279 homes and facilities of infrastructure were completely or partially destroyed.

Investigative and search operations are underway to find out all the details of the crimes.

The Investigative Committee also continues investigating a general criminal case opened into major crimes against peace and safety of humanity committed by representatives of military force of Ukraine in Donbass. 53 cases have been joined to form a single lawsuit. More than 130,000 people have been interviewed and more than 22,000 of them were recognized as victims.

According to the Russian Ministry of the Interior, in the period between 1 April 2014 and 30 August 2016, more than a million citizens fled from Southeast Ukraine and stayed in the Russian Federation. More than 400,000 Ukrainian citizens have applied to the Migration Directorate of the Russian Interior Ministry for a refugee status or a temporary refuge, while some 200,000 people have applied for the Russian citizenship.

According to the information we have, so far 2,722 complaints about the actions of the higher military and politic leadership of Ukraine have been lodged with the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. The victims are requesting more than 120 million euros in damage. By now the ECHR has taken up more than 1,970 complaints filed by residents of Southeastern Ukraine about multiple violations of their rights and freedoms and generally recognized principles and norms of the international law during military actions.

The applicants refer to violations of the Convention for the Protection of Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and additional protocols to it. In particular, they complaint about violation of fundamental rights and freedoms: the right to life, freedom and personal safety, to justice, respect for private and family life, to protection of property, and refer to the banishment of torture and the right to effective means of legal protection.

We are convinced that sooner or later the rights of those affected by the actions of Ukrainian military will be restored in court, and the files of the criminal case investigated by the RF Investigative Committee against officials of the Ukraine's Defense Minister and National Guard will also be reviewed in court.

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