

## Probe launched in shelling Donetsk region



The Ukrainian Armed Forces and the National Guard of Ukraine shelled Donetsk Region several times in the period of time between 4 and 6 February. The bombardments damaged dozens of homes and administration buildings, power lines and railway vehicles. The Department for investigating crimes connected to use of prohibited means and methods of warfare of the Investigative Committee's Head Office has opened an investigation in the use of prohibited means and methods of warfare under Part 1 of Article 356 of the RF Penal Code.

Kiev authorities continue illegally increasing its military presence along the Donbass frontline violating the Minsk ceasefire and the commitments it imposed. Those involved in the shelling included the 79<sup>th</sup> separate landing assault brigade, nationalistic battalion Donbass and Azov regiment.

Nobody has any questions about the purpose and results of such military presence. The Investigative Committee has many times since May 2014 informed about the progress of probes in major crimes

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committed by higher political and military commanders of Ukraine in Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Civilian people have been shot at, children have been killed, schools, hospitals and other civilian infrastructure destroyed for three years now. Investigators qualify those crimes as major ones – genocide, use of prohibited means and methods of warfare, extremism, participation of mercenaries in an armed conflict or military actions, abduction and others punishable under the RF Penal Code.

The Investigative Committee in close cooperation with operative services is working hard to learn the names of representatives of Armed Forces, National Guard, Ministry of the Interior, members of nationalistic volunteer battalions involved in the criminal punitive operation in southeastern Ukraine, in killings of civilians, destruction of civilian infrastructure necessary for people to survive. During this work the investigators have gotten irrefutable evidence of multiple crimes against peace and human safety. They have questioned more than 130 thousand people, more than 20 thousand of whom have been recognized injured parties, and have run hundreds of complicated expert examinations.

There are investigations ongoing against both higher political and military leadership of Ukraine who give criminal orders to kill civilians and against certain commanders and military servants of the Armed Forces and National Guard of Ukraine who execute those criminal orders. The people of interest include: Minister of the Interior Arsen Avakov, Minister of Defense Stepan Poltorak, Head of the Interior Ministry's General Staff Viktor Muzhenk, former commander of the Armed Forces' land forces Anatoly Pushnyakov, current commander of the Armed Forces' land forces Sergei Popko, commander of the National Guard Yuri Allеров, commander of the 72<sup>nd</sup> separate mechanized brigade Colonel Andrei Sokolov, commander of the 93<sup>rd</sup> separate mechanized brigade Colonel Vladislav Klochkov, Commander of the 30<sup>th</sup> separate mechanized brigade Colonel Vitaly Yakubov, commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> battalion, 14<sup>th</sup> separate mechanized brigade Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Prokopiv, commander of the 53<sup>rd</sup> separate mechanized brigade Colonel Aleksandr Gruzevich; commander of the 58<sup>th</sup> separate motorized infantry brigade Lieutenant Colonel Mikhail Drapaty; commander of the 128<sup>th</sup> separate mountain infantry brigade Colonel Sergei Shaptaka; commander of the 40<sup>th</sup> separate artillery brigade Colonel Sergei Panchenko; commander of the 56<sup>th</sup> separate mechanized brigade Colonel Sergei Perets and many others.

Looking into those crimes the investigators are guided by both international laws: the Minsk Ceasefire Protocol (Minsk, 05.09.2014) and the follow-up Memorandum (Minsk, 19.09.2014), the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Geneva, 12.08.1949) and Protocol Additional II (Geneva, 08.06.1997), Convention on the rights of the Child (New York, 20.11.1989) and Russian legislation (Part 3 of Article 12 of the RF Penal Code) allowing prosecuting foreign citizens who have committed crimes outside our country in case if they have not been punished.

More than 5 thousand files of evidence collected by the Investigative Committee show mass violations of human rights and freedoms and there is a humanitarian crisis in southeastern Ukraine caused by criminal actions of Ukrainian authorities. Crimes committed by Ukrainian militaries

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against civilians have no statute of limitations. Our investigators are going to do everything to sooner or later bring to justice both the executors and those who give orders.

The Investigative Committee once more confirms its readiness to pass the collected materials to international courts of justice at any moment so that they make impartial decisions.

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