

Extensive War Crimes in Eastern Ukraine. The Voices of the Innocent: “We Haven’t Got Anywhere to Run...”

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Today, not only the Russian mass media has raised the issue of the investigation of war crimes in Ukraine, but delegates of European media as well. Journalistic investigation led me to the Russian refugee camp, located not far from the place of military events. There is another world, though the planet is the same – the Earth. Water, food, light, absence of firing, a manifestation of humanity in everyday life allow people to feel safe again and with gratitude to accept the help and care in the neighboring state. All that they have lost overnight, continuing to remain citizens of Ukraine.

Before me there are those, who saw the war in the XXI century with their own eyes. I’m listening to them and internally I shudder at the thought that all this is experienced by the people whom 23 years ago we were unified with.

– For three days the relatives who remained in Lugansk haven’t slept. Happily you can still sleep at night as the sleep is impossible. Now there is a tank battle and a grenade attack. My mother called, crying.

Correspondent: Tell me, please, if the civilians tried to hang out any identification marks – the red cross flag or any flags so that they were not being bombed or shot.

– It’s useless! We tried it many times. The grandfather took a white flag when he went with children. They were all shot. They do not respond to any signs. The most terrible thing for those whose homes are near the mines is that they are destroyed. In settlements and in the city there are tipper-offs who orient mercenaries of the Kiev junta to bomb certain objects – shops, mines, hospitals. Snitches deliberately spread the rumors that the Chechens are located elsewhere. Since June 16, at 8 pm there have been bombed a military sports camp “Forest Dawns”, where there were only two watchmen and a granddaughter of one of the guards. I saw it with my own eyes how the aircraft dropped cluster bombs.

Correspondent: How did the armistice announced by Poroshenko go? Did the representatives of the National Guard suggest to hand over the weapon?

– There was armistice those days, they were shooting us as well. The weapon was never suggested to be handed over. Informants were waiting at places for the representatives of the National Guard and when they arrived, they only pointed the finger at those who had a different opinion and who participated in the defense of the territory. At schools at the Farewell Bell the children of such informers threatened our children: “I’ll shoot you and I’ll

kill you". It was the feeling that this was a zombie uttering. In the village Novoukrainka, of Luhansk region my acquaintances were talking in the company of neighbors and one of them said that they are leaving to Russia with the family the following morning. At night they were found dead. Only a 5-year-old child got to the intensive care, but I don't know at all, whether he survived. After canceling the truce the bombing became more fierce. In the village Makarovo the locals asked the volunteers to remove a checkpoint to pass up. As soon as militants departed, the civilians were opened fire at. They rushed back crying "militants, help." They were fleeing with children. But the soldiers of the National Guard were shooting them ruthlessly. The houses of my relatives from the settlement were completely destroyed. Now, being here, I don't know what happened to my house at all.



Correspondent: How often do you communicate with your relatives who remain in Ukraine?

– Often, every day. But our calls are suppressed, the talk is permanently interrupted. When I call my relatives, they ask: "Don't tell anything superfluous, talks are being monitored". We try to communicate very quickly.

Correspondent: Tell me, what the relations between you, who are in favour of the declaration of the independence and those who are for the present Ukrainian power are?

– When we come across each other and have to communicate, everyone expresses their opinion. We treat them normally and quietly. They've got a completely different reaction. They are ready, figuratively speaking, "to scratch our eyes" and avoid any communication.

Correspondent: What do you think causes such aggression?

– First and foremost, they are defiantly against communicating in Russian. And second, after the referendum, when Poroshenko refused to recognize our voluntary decision.

Correspondent: Hasn't the Ukrainian language become the national language for you during the years of independence of the republic?

– No. As many years as we have lived in our land for so many years we have been speaking only Russian. Someone on the outskirts of villages knows and can speak Ukrainian too, but it doesn't cause any anger in us or desire to kill. Earlier the Ukrainian language was taught as a subject in schools, and now Russian is established as a separate subject, and all the

lessons should be conducted in Ukrainian. It's hard for children to study, they didn't get used to it, many of them don't understand the language. English is taught through Ukrainian. Children have to translate from English into Russian at first, and then into Ukrainian. Why is there such a complexity?

Correspondent: How is the higher education organised?

- The same. Students must address the professors only in Ukrainian. All the subjects are taught only in Ukrainian. The Russian groups of training aren't present. Though it is more convenient to many professors to teach in Russian, they are obliged to teach in Ukrainian.

Correspondent: Does the majority of people run to Russia?

- Yes. Where else can we go? Those who have relatives in other regions of Ukraine, go there. We have no one there. But our children can't go, for example, to Western Ukraine even to study. The daughter of my sister after leaving school wanted to enter a Medical Academy to study to be a pharmacist. In Lugansk, it was also possible to study, but it's considered that this specialization is better taught in Lviv university. The girl called Lviv to find out what documents were necessary for the admission. She was immediately asked where she was from. As soon as they heard that she was from Lugansk region, they responded: "Prepare coffins." And one more my acquaintance took out his wife to Ternopol to live at her aunt's. At first, the wife was going shopping all by herself, but now she is afraid. Our dialect is different. You can hear the way we speak now.

Correspondent: It turns out, once defining your specific dialect, a feeling of hatred towards you is immediately erupted?

- It turns out so. Therefore, we have nowhere to run. I used to have friends earlier in Lviv and Lviv region. Now none of them keeps in touch with me.

Correspondent: Do you think you will be able to return to the territory of Ukraine soon?

- Where to return now when the power station and the railroad are blown up? There is no light, no gas, no food. Children are deprived of lives to sell their organs. The Russian journalists and television operators are killed to get rid of the proofs of the criminal actions. It's awfully to see the torn bodies and guts. If the National Guard want to take away the corpses of the soldiers, the militants always give them such an opportunity. As soon as the militants try to carry away the soldiers from the battlefield, the National Guard open fire straightaway. They even shot the grandfather Ostap who asked to take away the perished militants: "Sonny, in fact you are the same people as we are. Give them away. I will bury the guys". He was walking with a stick, he had his hair and beard all gray, whom could he do any harm? For what? Do they want to starve us because of the slate gas? It is necessary to America to have it by the means of such bloodshed?



Correspondent: What TV channels are broadcast at your place? Which of the things you have told about above are shown on the Ukrainian television?

- The Ukrainian channels didn't show the truth, the actual state of things. We stopped watching them. We watch Russia 24 and Lifenews.

Correspondent: How are you accepted in Russia?

- Oh, in Russia we were met very well. Here in the camp for refugees the staff is remarkable and the volunteers help us absolutely free of charge. They provide us with the humanitarian assistance. Each time they are carrying heavy packets, we see how their hands almost come off, they come every day. We have meals here three times a day. The food is nutritious. We were starving back in Ukraine, we really had nothing to eat. We shared a

meal among all in small piece. Here a sponsor who would not give his name, gave the gifts to 217 people last week, not only some delicious surprises for children, but also for all the adults. You know, we are given everything: washing powder, clothes pegs, blankets, and clothes. People come and ask: "Tell us what is it exactly that you need? We will go and will buy everything! Just tell what is necessary for you." I never expected that there would be such a warm attitude at the moment of grief in my life.

Correspondent: So do you really feel that you have met brothers and sisters here?

- Yes, that's this very feeling! My car broke down on the way here. It was impossible to be towed by a bus, so the volunteers have towed it here. Now they're helping with the repair. You can't imagine how greatly I have been dressed here, I wasn't wearing such things back at home. I was walking around in one shirt and a pair of trousers which already 5-6 years old, and here I was presented with everything new. I strongly ask to forgive us if we happen to be a little slow or if we say something wrong. Don't take offense to us. Do understand that we are the same people as you are, we have children. We didn't "horde", we haven't got anywhere to run!

" We haven't got anywhere to run! " This is the phrase I heard most often when, interrupting each other, people were sharing their pain with me. I could hardly fight back tears. There was a huge desire to embrace them. When the people have suffered such a severe psychological shock, you are afraid to show a lot of emotions, you are trying to be calm and to hand a feeling of peace over to them. I think I managed to do it a bit. I was delighted with the professional work of psychologists in Voronezh who for a short period of time managed to help the people recover from the shock. If upon arrival, they feared the drone of the aircraft and hunched their shoulders, the children cried, ran to parents and hid themselves, on day of my conversation, little three-year-old Ksyusha was not at all scared of an aircraft flying over us. I asked the beautiful blue-eyed girl: "Ksyusha, are you afraid of the airplane?" The child looked up in the sky and said: "No. The plane is big and Ksyusha is already big."

Looking round at a small group of people passing Ksyusha and me, I was surprised to know that the camp was visited by Zelmira Sinclair, Senior Legal Adviser to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. It turned out that Zelmira Sinclair was not invited but given a task of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to visit the border regions of Ukraine and to look at the conditions of the placement of the refugees. I managed to ask the Senior Adviser a few questions. Despite the fact that the massive influx of the refugees from South-Eastern Ukraine in Russia has increased significantly during the exacerbation of fighting between the supporters of pro-independence Donbass and Kiev's security officers, Zelmira Sinclair calmly reacted to this piece of news. She believes that it won't lead to a humanitarian catastrophe, as Russia is quite successfully coping with this problem. The Russian authorities take appropriate measures to ensure good conditions for the citizens of Ukraine, so no humanitarian catastrophe is expected in her opinion. Answering the question what measures the top management is going to take to reduce the number of the refugees in need the Senior Adviser responded that the assistance can only be provided in case of the official appeal of the Russian authorities. The issue of political matter - what other evidence of war crimes has still to be submitted to start an immediate investigation - appeared not to be in the competence of the UN representative. I heard hackneyed phrases: it is necessary to sit down at a negotiating table and to decide.

How long is it possible to carry on negotiations, solving nothing and taking no steps?



In Donbass region there is obviously a humanitarian catastrophe: medicines, essentials and food are not enough. Refugees en masse have begun to arrive in Voronezh region which borders Lugansk region of Ukraine, since June, 8. According only to data of July, 3, the day Zelmira Sinclair was visiting the refugee camps, in the region of Voronezh there came 1369 people. Generally they are inhabitants of Lugansk and Donetsk areas. On July, 1 there arrived over 150,000 refugees from Ukraine, who were adopted by 48 regions. According to the Ministry of Emergency Situations, there are almost 18,000 Ukrainian refugees in 252 centers of temporary accommodation in the Russian Federation. FMS reports that more than 14 thousand Ukrainians asked for a temporary shelter and a refugee status.

I don't know what Zelmira Sinclair has reported to the top management after the completing her task. Perhaps communicating with the citizens of Ukraine, being in camp, she took them for tourists. On the day of the meeting with the adviser people were looking rested. It's a pity that a Senior Legal Adviser did not visit the camp on the first day of their settlement and didn't see the frightened, screaming, half-naked children whose parents didn't have time to dress them when there started the bombing of their homes.

I want to believe that the mission of the UN representative is fundamentally different from the aims of the employees of the U.S. Department of State. America persistently continues to call the people running to Russia tourists, allegedly without knowing they were all threatened so much, that the people are afraid to ask for a status of refugees as they still have relatives as hostages. Their nearest and dearest were promised to be repressed if the people ask the status of refugees – this is the fact the USA doesn't wish to notice and take into consideration. All this clearly demonstrates how the actions of the present authorities and power structures of Ukraine are coordinated by the intelligence services of the USA which gave them a task at any cost to achieve the state when the international organizations wouldn't get to know the real number of people – namely of refugees, while tourists don't need to be taken into consideration at all. After all, if the person is too intimidated to seek shelter in Russia, then the statistics of the war crimes won't be

challenged...

I express special gratitude to all the staff of Voronezh Children's Health Camp "Bonfire", on the basis of which the camp for refugees has been formed. The Russian children who were to spend their holiday there, refused to have rest there so that the brothers and sisters from relative Ukraine could be rescued. I'm proud of the people of Voronezh, among which there are also my parents. Here, in Voronezh land, I've met amazing sympathy, nobleness and true patriotism.

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