

The Invisible Victims of the War in Ukraine

By [Dr. Leon Tressell](#)

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"It is the writer's duty to tell the terrible truth, and it is a reader's civic duty to learn this truth. To turn away, to close one's eyes and walk past is to insult the memory of those who have perished." — Vasily Grossman, [The Road: Stories, Journalism, and Essays](#)

On 20 February Didier Reynders, the European Commissioner for Justice, announced that a new international centre will be set up in July of this year to investigate war crimes committed by Russian forces in Ukraine over the course of the last year. Yet when Ukrainians are tortured by their own government the EU does not give a damn.

MEPs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace raised concerns on my behalf with the EU Commission regarding the situation of young communists Mikhail Kononovych and Aleksander Kononovych, who have been tortured by the SBU. Josep Borrell, Vice President of the European Commission arrogantly replied to them saying, "Ukraine has demonstrated the resilience of its institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law and human rights" and ignored the plight of these young communists.

Amidst the fanfare in the Western media regarding this issue there is a stony silence when it comes to investigating the war crimes committed against the Russian speaking population of the Donetsk and Lugansk regions now known as the Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republics DPR/LPR.

Since the spring of 2014 civilian settlements in the DPR/LPR have been subjected to incessant attacks by the heavy weaponry of the Ukrainian armed forces. The most widely used weaponry has been the heavy artillery systems which have been the biggest killer of civilians over the last 9 years.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has estimated that between April 2014 to 31 December 2021 that between 14,200-14,400 people have died in the civil war in eastern Ukraine. Of these at least 3,400 were civilians and the rest were combatants from both sides.

It should be emphasised that the exact number of casualties is still undetermined due to the large number of missing people, the fact that many civilians under artillery fire buried their relatives in makeshift graves and the fact that many of the militia men from the DPR/LPR did not have uniforms and so many will have been classified as civilians deaths.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the LPR, Anna Sororka, at a recent press conference “Scorched memory of Donbass: war crimes of the Ukrainian army and new data on the massacres of the civilian population” gave casualty figures which contrast sharply with those of the UN. Soroka stated that more than 2,000 civilians in the LPR were killed between April 2014 and February 2022 and that 3,365 were injured of whom 88 were children.

Meanwhile, the Commissioner for Human Rights in the DPR, Daria Morozova, stated at the same press conference that more than 5,000 people, including 91 children, were killed during this period. Besides this, over 8,000 civilians were wounded between April 2014-February 2022.

It should be further noted that DPR authorities note that large numbers of civilians were killed/injured by Western supplied armaments. Dmitry Kalshnikov, head of the forensic examination bureau of the DPR, has stated that:

“For the last five years, we have been finding special bullets used by NATO. We have never had such cartridges. As experts, such cartridges simply surprise us: at the entrance there is an awl, and at the exit it tears the tissue at all, we have never seen anything like this. This is assistance to Ukraine from international organizations.”

During the last year of war the OHCHR has estimated that over 7.1 thousand civilians have been killed and a further 11,756 were reported injured. It does note that the real figures are probably much higher.

The DPR mission to the Joint Control and Coordination Center (JSCC) has estimated that Ukrainian troops have fired 15,000 times at civilian areas of the republic. On its Telegram channel on Monday 20 February it wrote that 108,866 munitions of various calibres have been fired by Ukrainian troops over the last year. These include 39 Toch-U rockets, 231 HIMARS rockets, as well as 22,366 shells of NATO calibre 150mm. According to the JSCC there have been 92 incidents in which civilians have been hit by anti personnel mines.

In its press release the DPR mission to the Joint Control and Coordination Centre estimated that over the course of the last year of fighting 4,440 residents died including 132 children.

Its estimate of the damage caused by Ukrainian shelling to be as follows: 9,889 residential houses and 2,441 civilian infrastructure facilities, including 138 medical and 488 educational institutions, 965 social security facilities, 70 critical infrastructure facilities, 780 electricity, water, heat and gas supply facilities.

Thankfully, a few brave independent journalists, who are dismissed as Kremlin apologists in the West, have reported on this issue throughout the last 8 years. Eva K Bartlett, Christelle Neant and Graham Philips have doggedly recorded the Kiev government’s war on the civilians of the Donbass. The stand out for me is US navy veteran Patrick Lancaster who has issued daily video reports on Youtube showing in graphic, heart breaking detail the impact of Ukrainian shelling on the civilians of the two republics.

Sadly, the Western media and political elites have completely ignored the daily war crimes

being committed by Ukrainian forces against the civilians of the DPR and LPR. When you hear the next hysterical story in the Western media about alleged Russian war crimes then you should ask yourself the question: why are they not reporting the daily intensive shelling of civilians in Donetsk?

The grieving families of the invisible victims of the Ukraine war deserve our sympathy and support.

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