



CIVIC SECTOR OF EUROMAIDAN GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

EuroMaidan Newsletter # 56

Ukraine Votes to Abandon Neutrality, Set Sights on NATO Hundreds released in mass prisoner exchange in east Ukraine

The Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine's parliament, adopted the austerity-driven state budget for 2015 during an extraordinary overnight session that ended early on Dec. 29. The fiscal deficit is not expected to exceed \$4 billion, which is 3.7 percent of the projected gross domestic product of \$108 billion. <http://goo.gl/d0OacH>

The Ukrainian parliament enacted big tax changes in a budget that emphasizes austerity. The number of taxes was reduced from 22 to 9. Personal income tax grew from 17 percent to 20 percent for those who make more than \$800 a month. <http://goo.gl/0hBeni>

Ukraine's parliament has voted to abandon the country's neutral "non-bloc" status and set a course for NATO membership, a move immediately denounced by Russia as "unfriendly." <http://goo.gl/cRzFrJ>

On December 24, Ukraine and rebel leaders completed another round of peace talks aimed at reaching a ceasefire in the east of Ukraine. After almost five-hour of negotiations in Minsk, participants left the venue without commenting to reporters. <http://goo.gl/OGnLb5>

Ukrainian Railways cut rail links with Crimea over security fears. <http://goo.gl/EkJMmv>

Only 16% of Ukrainians want the Donbas region to leave Ukraine, according to a new poll conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology. More than half of the people surveyed in the poll were not ready to lose the eastern region. In the Donbas region 72.6% of those who took part in the study support the region staying part of Ukraine. <http://goo.gl/tvMqdX>

A bomb explosion killed one in Odesa. <http://goo.gl/qd6kd3>

Red Cross Official Says Moscow Used 'Humanitarian' Convoys to Ship Arms to Militants in Ukraine. <http://goo.gl/U8GGP7>

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a new military doctrine echoing Kremlin accusations that Western nations sponsored a coup in Ukraine. <http://goo.gl/z9JtKA>

Since the Maidan uprising, Ukrainian-Canadians have raised nearly \$2.4 million for medical training, equipment, sleeping bags and even kids' Christmas presents. <http://goo.gl/3tzLVJ>

Left: 27 Dec. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko met the air force aircraft with 145 Ukrainian soldiers who were released from captivity. <http://goo.gl/xgDa7p> ;
Video <http://goo.gl/GLLJvr>



Russia's illegal prisoners of war

Russia's illegal prisoners of war. <http://goo.gl/xJWkO8>

Ukraine's number one POW in Russia, pilot and MP Nadiya Savchenko described what she thinks about her illegal detention. <http://goo.gl/Wm4gv6>

Nadiya Savchenko to continue her hunger strike indefinitely after appeal rejected. <http://goo.gl/hGjMC6>

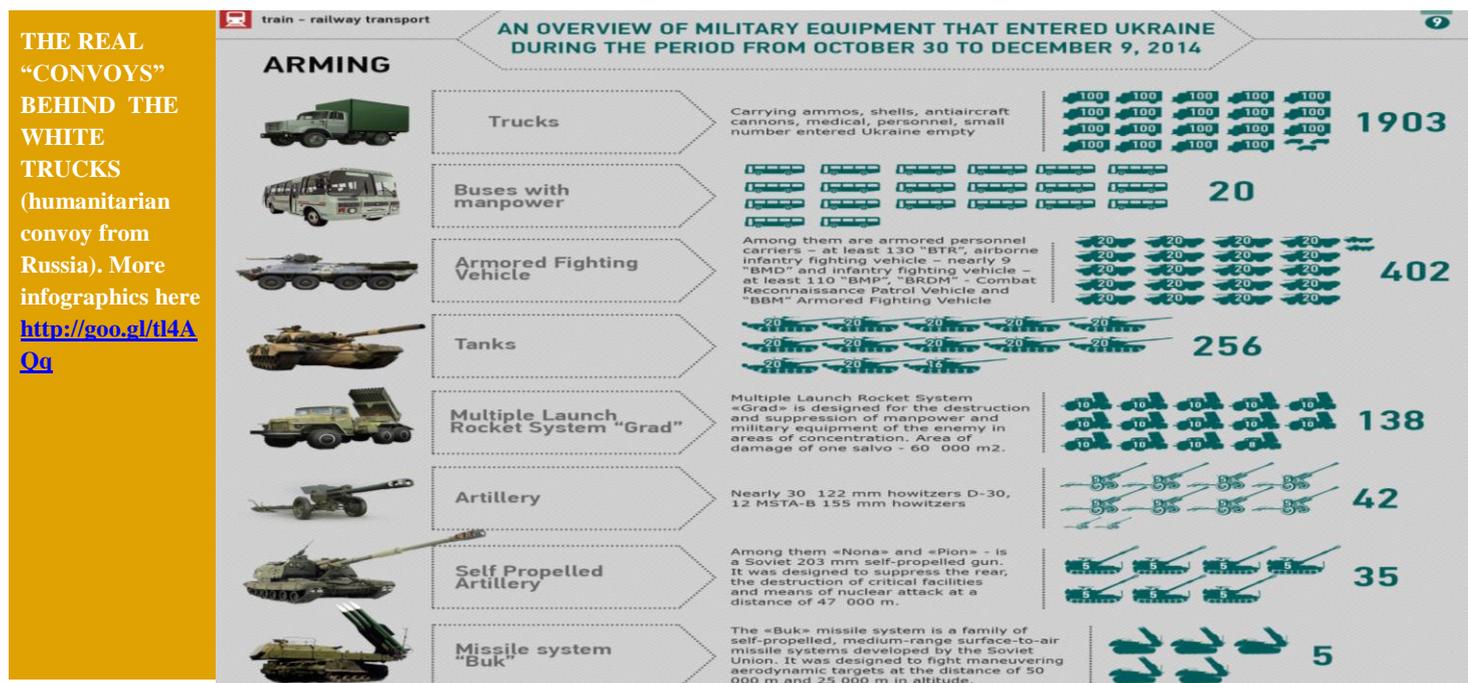
Despite “peace talks,” terrorist continue to attack Ukrainian troops

Dec 30. Situation in Eastern Ukraine. <http://goo.gl/sIBFNF>

26.12. Tymchuk: Despite the “peace talks,” Russia-backed terrorist forces continue to carry out attacks on the positions of Ukrainian troops, although the number of fire strikes has decreased considerably. Meanwhile, the enemy continues to regroup its forces. <http://goo.gl/pBP3wI>

26.12.14. The SMM monitored the simultaneous release of hostages/prisoners in Yasynuvata (18km North-East of Donetsk city). <http://goo.gl/R6vObz>

A video interview uploaded to the Internet shows two recently demobilized Russian Federation infantry conscripts (one in the rank of a sergeant) who state that during their service they participated in the annexation of the Crimea by Russia and fought in Luhansk. (Video) <http://goo.gl/fcXZt6>



THE REAL “CONVOYS” BEHIND THE WHITE TRUCKS (humanitarian convoy from Russia). More infographics here <http://goo.gl/t14AQg>

Ukraine cuts power, cancels trains to Crimea Protests spreading in East Ukraine’s occupied territories

Ukraine cuts power, cancels trains to Crimea. <http://goo.gl/bUejFE>

The UN and numerous NGOs warn that Donbas is facing a major humanitarian crisis, with the most vulnerable in danger of starvation. Militants from the self-proclaimed ‘Donetsk People’s Republic’ have resorted to coercion and bribery to pull off propaganda stunts in the centre of Donetsk. <http://goo.gl/34Hdzd>

Kremlin-backed militants in cities under their control are proving unable to come up with salaries and pensions as promised, and protests are spreading with people hungry and desperate. <http://goo.gl/HR00fQ>

More than 500 cases of human rights’ violations were confirmed in the last 10 months since the occupation of Crimea. These were crimes committed against civic, religious, socio-economic and ethnic minorities’ rights. <http://goo.gl/k0E8k2>

Left: 2014 world iconic photos. <http://goo.gl/TbAId6>
Right: New photograph project about modern Ukrainian history <http://ukrainefreedom.org/en/>



Ukraine's 2015 budget proposal stirs fresh protests

Ukrainian Nuclear Plant Shuts Down Reactor

Finance Minister Natalie Jeresko's budget proposal for 2015 was greeted with protests on 28 December as demonstrators appealed for the government to reduce the burden of war in the east and the hryvnia's devaluation on taxpayers.

<http://goo.gl/tcepl2>

The role of the State is set to rise, directly contrary to what had been promised in the government action plan just two weeks ago: reduction of budget expenditures by 10 percent in 2015-2016. This severely damages the credibility of the new government, weakens its capacity to lead the country out of the crisis, and strengthens the importance of the parliament.

<http://goo.gl/Fpbg6m>

Budget-2015. What are the options now?

<http://goo.gl/MYCpJz>

Pluses and Minuses of Ukraine's National Bank Leadership. <http://goo.gl/ddcE9j>

Ukrainian Nuclear Plant Shuts Down Reactor For Second Time This Month. The 6,000-megawatt Zaporizhzhya facility is Europe's largest nuclear plant and the fifth-most-powerful in the world.

<http://goo.gl/JYVvdn>

Unlike many industries that experienced a sharp decline in performance during 2014, Ukraine's IT

sector managed to largely persevere through political and economic turmoil. Ukraine's IT industry is valued at over \$5 billion in value and has over 500 outsourcing companies, over 100 global R&D centers, over 100 e-commerce companies and more than 2000 startups. More than 50,000 engineers are employed by Ukrainian IT firms. <http://goo.gl/nBiW4Y>

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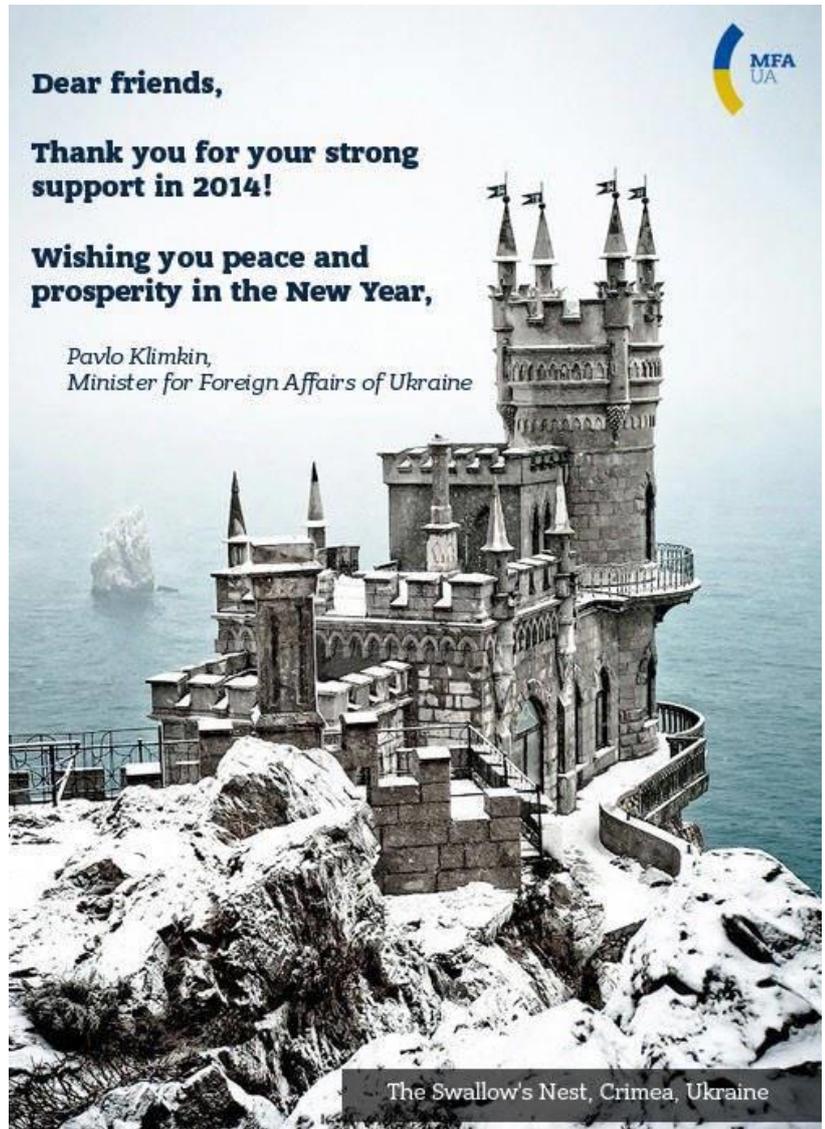
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Dear friends,

Thank you for your strong support in 2014!

Wishing you peace and prosperity in the New Year,

*Pavlo Klimkin,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine*

The Swallow's Nest, Crimea, Ukraine