



**Crisis in Ukraine: Daily Briefing**

**16 July, 2014, 7 PM Kyiv time**

**1. Kremlin-backed violence in Eastern Ukraine**

The active phase of the Anti-Terrorism Operation (ATO) in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts continues. The National Security and Defense Council stated at 12 pm Kyiv time that 11 Ukrainian soldiers were killed in the last 24 hours. The Ministry of Defense reports that as of 9am Kyiv time, the most difficult situation is in Donetsk, Luhansk, Lysychansk, Antratsyt, Severodonetsk and Krasnodon, where Kremlin-backed armed extremists are preparing defensive positions in seized administrative buildings. The Ministry reports that in the last 24 hours, Kremlin-backed armed extremists fired on 14 checkpoints and positions of the Ukrainian forces. The National Security and Defense Council (RNBO) reports that at 5 am near Stepanivka, Donetsk oblast, Kremlin-backed armed extremists tried to break out of an encirclement, using tanks, mortar and anti-tank rockets. Ukrainian forces repelled the attack. The RNBO stated that Grad truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers in possession of Kremlin-backed armed extremists have been deployed in residential areas of Donetsk city and are being moved around every 3-4 hours. The RNBO reported that the Kremlin-backed armed extremists have in their possession a "Strela-10" guided surface-to-air missile system, and that this type of weapon could have come only from the Russian Federation. The RNBO stated that today more evidence of the violation of the Ukrainian border by Russia were found – the border detachment near Amvrosiyika, Donetsk discovered evidence of penetration of the Ukrainian border (70 meters) by 5 pieces of military equipment – likely Grad truck-mounted multiple rocket launcher systems, as well as spent ammunition. The State Border Service of Ukraine reports that in the last 24 hours, almost 10 incidents of firing on border checkpoints took place, from both Grad truck-mounted multiple rocket launchers and mortars. The State Border Service reports that the Russian Federation continues to deploy forces to border areas, and that there were two incidents of unmanned drone aircraft carrying out air reconnaissance over northern Luhansk oblast.

**2. Trilateral Contact Group Meeting**

On 15 July, a meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (Ukraine, OSCE, Russia) took place in Kyiv. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine stated that "...the Trilateral Contact Group has made all necessary efforts for a resumption of consultations with representatives of the separatists in the east of Ukraine. Unfortunately, a video conference with the separatists, scheduled for today with the aim of agreeing on modalities for a next round of consultations, and agreed upon at the highest international level, did not materialize...In the opinion of the Contact Group, this indicates a lack of willingness on the side of the separatists to engage in substantive talks on a mutually agreed cease-fire."

**3. Ukrainian Consul meets with Ukrainian pilot Nadia Savchenko illegally detained by Russia**

Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs P. Klimkin informed President P. Poroshenko that Ukrainian Consul H. Breskalenko was allowed to meet with Ukrainian pilot Nadia Savchenko, who is illegally detained in prison in Voronezh, Russia. Savchenko confirmed that she was taken out of Ukraine without her consent, with a bag covering her head, in handcuffs. Her abductors changed cars several times. She stated that in protest of being illegally taken to another country and in demanding a meeting with the Consul, she went on a hunger strike, which she has stopped since being allowed to meet with the Consul.

**4. Special Meeting of the European Council**

A Special Meeting of the European Council, attended by the heads of state or government of EU countries, is being held in Brussels on 16 July. One of the items on the agenda is the situation in Ukraine. It has been

reported that the possible implementation of sectoral sanctions against the Russian Federation is to be discussed. According to a release by the office of the President of Ukraine, in a phone call with President P. Poroshenko on 15 July, German Chancellor A. Merkel “assured that the following day, Ukraine would receive ‘firm support’ from the EU at the meeting of the European Council.”

**5. Presidential Administration waiting for “decisive” position of European Council**

V. Chaliy, deputy head of the Presidential Administration, stated that Ukraine is waiting for “important, more influential decisions in connection with the tense situation in the eastern regions of country” from the European Council. “First of all, we are waiting for an adequate, decisive, joint position of European countries.”