

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine, rebels agree on prisoner exchange before year's end**

23.12.2019 Russia's envoy at talks between Ukraine and Russia-backed separatists said Monday that they agreed on conditions for a prisoner exchange following a deal reached by the two nations' presidents. [\(AP\)](#)

**2. Ukraine appeals to UN Secretary-General over Russia's actions in occupied Crimea**

24.12.2019 Ukraine has expressed its resolute protest against another "visit" by Russian President Vladimir Putin to the temporarily occupied Crimea and the opening of a rail link across the Kerch Strait. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**3. Fulfillment of Minsk Agreements to be discussed with French, German parliamentarians within next 30-45 days**

25.12.2019 The emergence of parliamentary dimension in the Normandy format will promote the Donbas peace process, head of the Inter-Parliamentary Dialogue for Peace: Ukraine - Russia - Germany - France association and deputy of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada Viktor Medvedchuk said following a meeting with State Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin on Tuesday. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**4. Russia can complete Nord Stream 2 pipeline by itself: Kremlin**

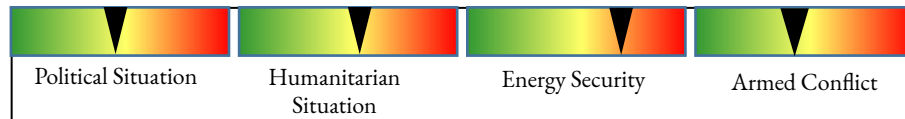
26.12.2019 Russia's energy minister says despite US sanctions, Moscow will proceed to finish the Baltic Sea pipeline. Germany is dependent on imports for 92% of its gas needs; Washington wants a slice of the lucrative supply trade. [\(DW\)](#)

**5. Infrastructure Ministry condemns launch of train from Russia to Crimea**

26.12.2019 "Illegal launch of railway communication between the Russian Federation and annexed Ukrainian Crimea is another violation of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine and international law. Forty-three hours for the trip is Russia's next step for total impact on people in annexed Crimea. Such a train is a purely ideological approach," Infrastructure Minister Vladyslav Kryklyi [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**6. Russia's Gazprom pays Ukraine \$2.9 billion as part of gas deal**

27.12.2019 Last week, Russia and Ukraine announced the terms of a new gas transit deal under which Moscow will supply Europe for at least five years via its former Soviet neighbor and pay a \$2.9 billion settlement to Kiev to end a legal dispute. [\(REUTERS\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- Formerly adopted resolutions of the UN General Assembly not only directly condemn the construction of the bridge as a serious violation but also warn Russia against making official visits to the Crimean peninsula without the consent of Ukraine. Although Ukraine and UN has expressed their decisive protest against provocative visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to the temporarily occupied Crimea, Russia seems to continue assuming Crimea as an inseparable part of itself.
- Overseen by officials from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, another prisoner exchange, which had been hailed by President Zelensky as a key achievement of the talks in Paris on Dec. 9, has been realized. As regards to up and down relations between Russia and Ukraine, it seems the prospects for peace in 2020 are blurred.

**7. Defense Ministry signs contracts on second batch of Javelin missiles**

27.12.2019 The Defense Ministry of Ukraine has signed contracts for the purchase of the second batch of Javelin anti-tank missile systems. "During the fourth quarter, due to the concentration of resources, the Defense Ministry of Ukraine managed to sign contracts for the supply of the second batch of Javelin anti-tank missile systems, which are manufactured in the United States," he said. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**8. New Year's swap: Dozens head home as Ukraine & breakaway Donbass conduct 'all for all' prisoner exchange**

29.12.2019 Kiev is exchanging dozens of prisoners with the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk republics in the first such effort in two years. The swap was given a boost at the recent Normandy Four talks in Paris. The self-declared Donetsk People's Republic is handing over 55 people to Kiev, while receiving 87 of their followers. [\(RT\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**9. Trump blocks Putin's pipeline with US sanctions**

22.12.2019 The fact is that the United States was able to do what the European Union wasn't. In 2018, the European Union's parliament recommended Nord Stream 2 be canceled, but to no avail. It has also threatened controls, but been thwarted all along the way because Putin has co-opted influencers with unseemly offers, while Gazprom flouted regulations and openly boasted it would not be restrained once Nord Stream 2 was finished. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**10. Russia-Ukraine War: Is peace possible in 2020?**

26.12.2019 The undeclared war between Russia and Ukraine will enter its seventh year in 2020 with no end in sight to a conflict that has shattered the security assumptions of the post-1991 world. While fighting is now sporadic along the largely static frontlines, Kremlin-commanded forces still occupy much of eastern Ukraine and the death toll continues to mount. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**11. Overview of 2019: new government, weak reforms, and expectations for brighter future**

28.12.2019 Ukraine concludes 2019 with small economic victories, grounds for high hopes, and reasons for certain disappointment. The upcoming 2020 may also be full of changes, and the declared reforms can thoroughly shake up the national economy. Many citizens will remember the outgoing year, first of all, for a complete reset of power. [\(UNIAN\)](#)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Bill Imposing Sanctions on Companies Building Russian Gas Pipeline Heads to White House

17.12.2019 The U.S. Senate on Tuesday passed legislation to slap sanctions on companies building a massive underwater pipeline to bring Russian natural gas to Germany, but it was uncertain whether the measures would slow completion of the project. ([THE NEW YORK TIMES](#))

### 2. Zelensky signs law on prolongation of special status of local self-government in certain parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions for a year

18.12.2019 President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky has signed bill No. 2569 adopted by the parliament on the extension until the end of 2020 of the law on the special procedure for local self-government in certain regions of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. ([INTERFAX](#))

### 3. Putin says Kiev needs direct talks with Russia-backed breakaway Donbass region

19.12.2019 Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday Ukraine's leaders needed to have direct talks with the Russia-backed separatist region of Donbass in an effort to restore peace in eastern Ukraine. ([REUTERS](#))

### 4. Putin defends rebel leaders in eastern Ukraine

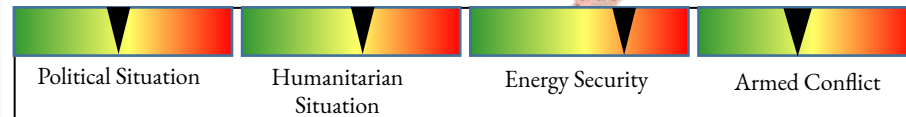
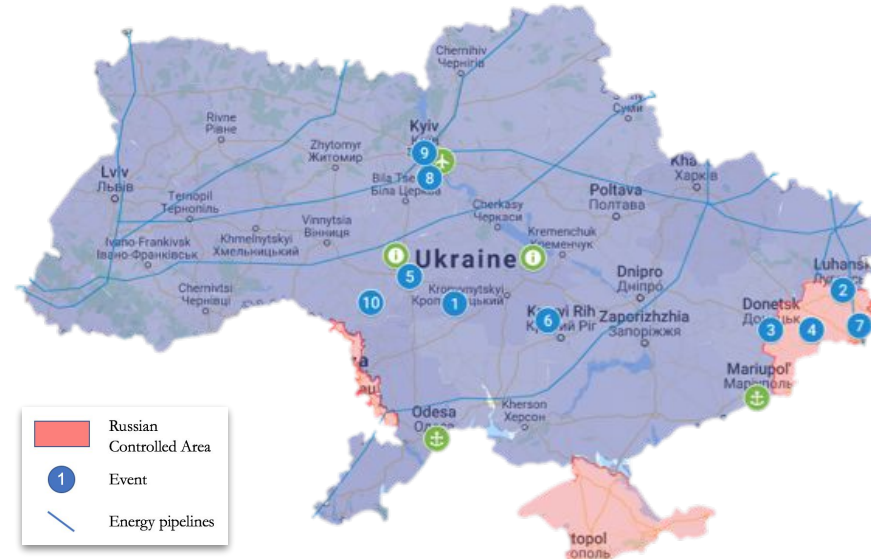
19.12.2019 President Putin has defended the pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine, calling for direct talks between them and the Kyiv government to help restore peace. He said Ukraine had accepted the rebel leaders' signatures on the 2015 Minsk ceasefire deal, so recognising them. ([BBC](#))

### 5. Parliamentary committee on Ukraine-EU association hosts heated discussion on language issue for minorities in Ukraine

20.12.2019 A heated discussion was held in the Parliamentary Committee of the Ukraine-EU Association on the situation in Ukraine on languages for minorities. Advocates of Ukraine's position regarding the promotion of learning the Ukrainian language in schools and advocates of minority rights to study in their native language were not in agreement. ([INTERFAX](#))

### 6. Putin's annual press conference: key remarks on Ukraine

20.12.2019 Putin mentioned the war in Donbas and Kremlin-backed leaders of the so-called "DPR" and "LPR". He was also asked to speak of when the Ukraine-Russia state border in the east will be sealed and if Gazprom is to pay off the three-billion-dollar debt to Naftogaz ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- On December 19 the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin held an annual news conference in which Ukraine came into the spotlight quite a number of times. "Black Sea region and eastern Ukraine are Russia's original lands" was one of the most scandalous remarks.
- Seeing the law on the special status of Donbas as the key paragraph of the Minsk agreements, Putin regards the extension of this law for one year as a positive sign. However Putin lays emphasis on being cemented of it in the Constitution and making it permanent.
- Unlike his predecessor Petro Poroshenko, President Zelensky has been eager to demonstrate that he can negotiate a compromise with his Russian counterpart. Following the Normandy Format summit in Paris, President Zelensky said, "It's easier for us to extend this legislation" with the expectation of seeing certain steps from Russia's side showing an indication of a de-escalation.
- Putin's view of Eastern Ukraine as a part of Russia's original lands, and pushing Ukraine to accept the authority of the separatist so-called republics and directly negotiate with them while Kremlin's positioning as a mediator rather than a party of the conflict seem to be the signs of freezing the conflict as in Transnistria case of Moldova.

### 7. Steinmeier formula' can be incorporated through amendments to law on Donbas - Foreign Ministry

20.12.2019 The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry believes that a "Steinmeier formula" should be incorporated into Ukrainian legislation through the introduction of amendments to the law on the peculiarities of local self-governance in certain areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions ([UKRINFORM](#))

## OPINIONS

### 8. Paris impasse: Time for Zelensky to get real about Russia

17.12.2019 Zelensky promised Ukrainian voters he would end the undeclared war with Russia, and this has remained a central pillar of his foreign policy since taking office. In Zelensky's public statements, the path to peace looked relatively straightforward, with everything hinging on his ability to sit down and reason with Vladimir Putin, man to man. This emphasis on direct dialogue with Putin was the motivation behind extensive efforts to revive the moribund Normandy Format of peace talks involving the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

### 9. Putin's imperial ambitions mean Ukraine must learn to live with frozen conflict

19.12.2019 Ever since his landslide election victory in spring 2019, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has been eager to demonstrate that, unlike his "nationalist" predecessor Petro Poroshenko, he can negotiate a compromise with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. However, it is now increasingly obvious this approach will not work, and there is very little Ukraine can do about it. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

### 10. Ukrainian government sets ambitious goals for privatization of state enterprises

20.12.2019 Privatization of state or publically-owned property is one of a number of large-scale plans recently announced by the Ukrainian government. While there are success stories of privatization in the country's modern history, the Ukrainian privatization of the 1990s also contributed to establishing the oligarchic system – the major problem of modern Ukraine. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))



**KEY EVENTS**

**1. In Paris, Putin and Zelensky take hesitant steps toward peace**

10.12.2019 The leaders of France, Germany, Ukraine and Russia met in Paris for five and a half hours of talks on Monday, producing at the day's end a [joint communique](#) that said all parties would "commit to a full and comprehensive implementation" of a ceasefire in Ukraine by the end of the year. ([CNN](#))

**2. Ukraine and Russia agree to implement ceasefire**

10.12.2019 In a written statement, the countries agreed to the release and exchange of all "conflict-related detainees" by the end of the year. The two sides also pledged to disengage military forces in three additional regions of Ukraine by the end of March 2020, without specifying which regions would be affected. ([BBC](#))

**3. UN resolution condemns Russia's occupation of Crimea**

10.12.2019 The UN General Assembly (UNGA) has approved a resolution condemning Russia's occupation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol and urged the withdrawal of its military forces "without delay". The vote in the 193-member Assembly on Monday was 63-19 in favour of the measure, with 66 nations abstaining and 45 not voting. ([ALJAZEERA](#))

**4. Paris summit of the Normandy Four: Ukraine's tactical wins**

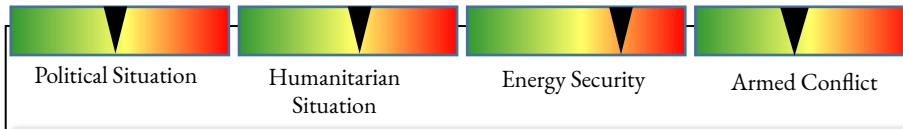
10.12.2019 On December 9, 2019 the long-awaited Normandy Four summit was held in Paris. Despite the concerns of many Ukrainian analysts President Zelenskyi having no extensive political experience did not become an "easy prey" for Putin. ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))

**5. Opinion: A Ukraine summit to Putin's taste**

10.12.2019 Things are going swimmingly, Russian President Vladimir Putin must have thought at the pre-Christmas summit in Paris. The West and Ukraine are willing to compromise to woo him, the undisputed ruler of Russia, and negotiate a peace agreement for Ukraine's Donbass region. ([DW](#))

**6. Ukraine extends special status for Donbass after 'Normandy Four' summit**

12.12.2019 Ukraine's parliament voted on Thursday to extend regulations giving limited self-rule to eastern regions, a prerequisite for a deal to settle the five-year conflict there. Lawmakers gave a one-year extension to the regions' "special status," which was adopted in 2014 and has been extended several times ([RT](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- *After series of confidence-building measures (ceasefire, prisoner exchanges, additional disengagement zones, demining) which reduced the violence and improve the conditions for follow-on negotiations, on December 9, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin for the first time during long-awaited peace talks in Paris. In over three years, this summit was the first gathering of the Normandy Four.*
- *Proving fears of "capitulation" to be misplaced and not requiring Zelensky to cross any of the red lines, the summit considered it necessary to incorporate the "Steinmeier formula" into the Ukrainian legislation, however remained many still-unresolved issues.*
- *Getting some wins, Zelensky agrees to extend the special status law expiring at the end of December, for which Ukraine's parliament is unwilling to renew.*
- *Taking Ukrainians' division on special status for the occupied regions into account, it seems that bringing peace to the eastern Ukraine needs redoubling efforts and it is now for Zelensky to begin the hard works at home.*

**7. Volodymyr Zelenskyy suggested continuing the process of simplification of procedures of border crossing by citizens of GUAM countries**

12.12.2019 President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with Prime Minister of Georgia Giorgi Gakharia, Prime Minister of Moldova Ion Chicu and Vice Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Ali Akhmedov on the occasion of completing Ukraine's presidency at the GUAM Organization for Democracy and Economic Development in 2019. ([UKRAINIAN PRESIDENCY](#))

**8. Germany Rejects Any Extraterritorial Sanctions Amid US Threats Against Nord Stream-2**

12.12.2019 German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has slammed US plans to sanction Nord Stream-2. Meanwhile, the German Economic Committee has condemned the sanctions against Nord Stream 2 as an "insult to European sovereignty" and "inadmissible meddling". ([SPUTNIK](#))

**OPINIONS**

**9. The Devil in the Details: Risks of Donbas Peace Process after Normandy Summit**

10.12.2019 The meeting has revived the "Normandy Format", aimed at finding a peaceful settlement to the Russian-Ukrainian war in Donbas. The 9 December meeting was the first since 2016. Despite hopes that this meeting would lead to progress in peace talks, the final press conference of the four leaders raised more questions than answers. The devil, as usual, is in the details. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

**10. What the West Gets Wrong About Russia's Intentions in Ukraine**

11.12.2019 In the midst of the Trump impeachment drama, it is easy to forget a more geopolitically pressing issue in Ukraine: Russia's ongoing involvement in the eastern part of the country and Ukraine's stalled partnership with the West to push it back. ([CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER](#))

**11. European integration is taking root across Ukraine despite Russia's best efforts**

12.12.2019 Ukraine has fought harder than any other country for European integration. Progress has come at an incredibly high price, with efforts to conclude a relatively innocuous Association Agreement with the European Union in 2013 plunging Ukraine into a maelstrom of revolution, economic crisis and undeclared war with Russia that continues to this day. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

Russia-Ukraine Conflict  
(02 Dec - 08 Dec 2019)

## KEY DATES

9 Dec 2019 - Normandy Summit (Paris)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Hungary to block Ukraine's NATO membership over language law

04.12.2019 Hungary's foreign minister on Wednesday said Budapest would block Ukraine's membership in NATO until Kiev restored the rights that ethnic Hungarians had before a language law curbed minorities' access to education in their mother tongues. ([REUTERS](#))

### 2. Ukraine threatens to wall off part of Donbass region if no agreement with Russia

05.12.2019 A top Ukrainian presidential aide on Thursday said Ukraine would wall off the rest of the country from occupied territories if Russia failed to agree to a ceasefire and prisoner swap at a summit in Paris next week. If Russia doesn't want to agree to a deal "in this case we will be building a wall and life will go on," Andriy Yermak said at a forum in London. "We will be living unfortunately in a scenario of a frozen conflict." ([REUTERS](#))

### 3. Trump intends to give \$250 mln in new military aid for Ukraine - Pentagon

05.12.2019 A senior Pentagon official has stated that U.S. President Donald Trump will seek at least another \$250 million in security aid for Ukraine in his 2020 budget request, including lethal Javelin anti-tank weapons, according to Defense News. ([UKRINFORM](#))

### 4. Little wiggle room as Ukraine, Russia leaders meet for crunch Paris talks

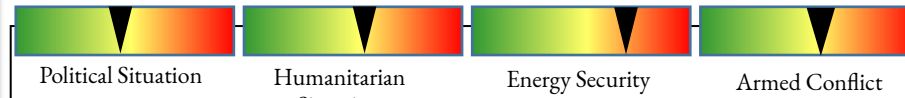
05.12.2019 Ukrainian and Russian leaders will try to seal a ceasefire in eastern Ukraine and agree prisoner swaps when they meet next week but with Kiev politically constrained and Moscow unlikely to bend, prospects for peace remain bleak, diplomats said. ([REUTERS](#))

### 5. Ukraine conflict: Can peace plan in east finally bring peace?

06.12.2019 After five and a half years of conflict in eastern Ukraine, military and diplomatic moves have begun with the aim of securing peace. Ukrainian forces and Russian-backed separatists have pulled back from three frontline towns and the stage is set for the first leaders' summit in years. ([BBC](#))

### 6. Russia won't stop gas transit through Ukraine when Nord Stream 2 becomes operational - Putin

06.12.2019 Commissioning of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which is a commercial project, does not mean that Russia will abandon gas transit through Ukraine, said Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday. ([RT](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- *Not only in terms of the role in the relations between Russia and Europe, but also intermediary role between Russia and Ukraine, Normandy Summit appears to arouse interest in the agenda. Notwithstanding solution seeking parties determine their "modus operandi" in case of failure in the promising meeting, the parties are likely not to miss the opportunity after 3-year-break at the presidency level. Besides, it is hard to expect a miracle from the summit for a full conflict resolution.*
- *Even underlined by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at a NATO press conference in October ("Ukraine is complying with all the recommendations of the Venice Commission on the education law"), the mother tongue based education in Ukraine seems to continue to be relevant. Not being on good terms with Ukraine after Moscow's annexation of the Crimea peninsula in 2014, Hungary brings this issue forward on all occasions, which is affecting 150.000 ethnic Hungarians living in Ukraine. This issue will likely be an obstacle on Ukraine's way to the NATO membership and may also affect a closer cooperation.*

## 7. Nord Stream 2 Sanctions Will Be Included in US Defence Bill - Reports

07.12.2019 The United States has been consistently trying to undermine the Nord Stream 2 project, threatening everyone involved with sanctions while promoting its own liquefied natural gas on the European market. ([SPUTNIK](#))

## OPINIONS

### 8. Ukraine's Divided House Still Stands

04.12.2019 Ukrainians register the deepening scandal around the alleged quid pro quo—U.S. President Donald Trump's pressuring of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky—as a sideshow to the mind-bending problem that has hung over their country since 2014: Should Ukraine reintegrate the territories of its eastern region, known as Donbas, that are controlled by Russia and its separatist clients? If so, when? And how? ([FOREIGN AFFAIRS](#))

### 9. Why care about Ukraine and the Budapest Memorandum

04.12.2019 In the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, the United States, Russia, and Britain committed "to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine" and "to refrain from the threat or use of force" against the country. Those assurances played a key role in persuading the Ukrainian government in Kyiv to give up what amounted to the world's third largest nuclear arsenal, consisting of some 1,900 strategic nuclear warheads.

([BROOKINGS](#))

### 10. What the New EU Leadership Should Do About Russia

04.12.2019 The EU's Russia policy is at a crossroads. A new European Commission has just taken office, and its president, Ursula von der Leyen, has declared she wants a "geopolitical commission" that takes note of the fundamental changes in the international system, thereby preserving the EU's key interest in democracy and a rule-based, multilateral international order. ([CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER](#))

### 11. Why negotiate? Expectations for the Normandy Four meeting

07.12.2019 It's not so much a question about the need for dialogue between the victim and aggressor, or the wish for a political solution to the Russian instigated war. Nor is it about what Ukraine needs. It is rather a question about managing expectations in the face of unabated Russian aggressions. It's a question about Ukraine's motives and motivation. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))



**KEY DATES**

9 Dec 2019 - Normandy Summit (Paris)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine's Naftogaz pledges to press on with Russia gas talks**

25.11.2019 Ukrainian state energy firm Naftogaz has pledged to press on with talks on gas transit with Russian gas exporter Gazprom and the European Union, a senior Naftogaz official said on Monday.

Gazprom, which owes Ukraine around \$3 billion, may repay that debt with gas supplies, Naftogaz Executive Director Yuriy Vitrenko said on Facebook. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**2. The Oligarchs Who Lost Ukraine and Won Washington**

26.11.2019 That Ukraine is at the heart of the U.S. impeachment inquiry is no coincidence. The country is ground zero for the struggle between democratic rule of law and authoritarian oligarchy. Halfway around the world from Washington's halls of power, Ukraine sits along a civilizational and geopolitical fault line. [\(FOREIGN AFFAIRS\)](#)

**3. Ukraine focuses on uprooting corruption amid US scrutiny**

26.11.2019 In the first months of his administration, Zelenskiy has managed to win quick passage of anti-corruption legislation to identify illegal wealth held by officials, calling for up to 10 years in prison for those who cannot satisfactorily explain income of more than \$250,000.

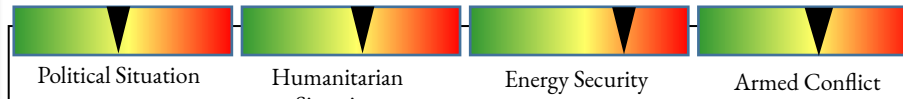
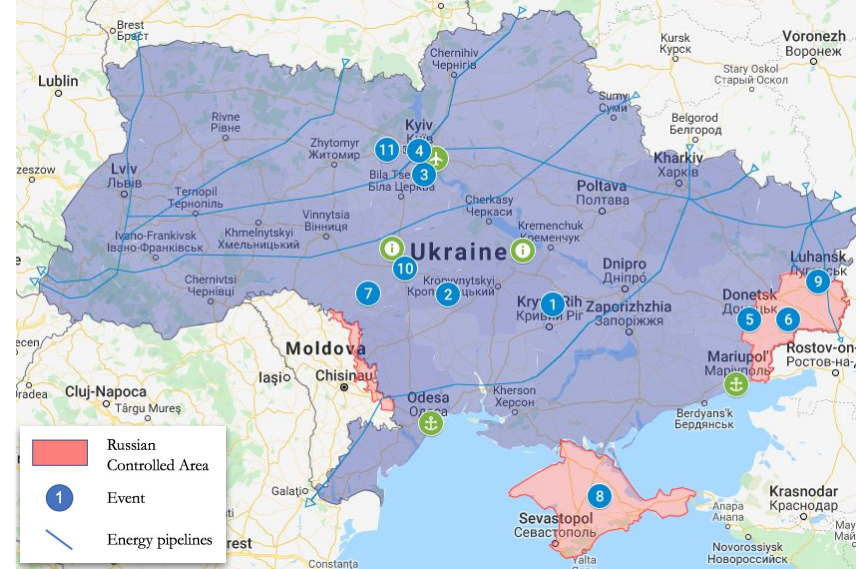
In addition, a special anti-corruption court that the West had for years urged be established finally began working in September. That same month, Zelenskiy announced the creation of a hotline for whistleblowers to report wrongdoing. [\(AP\)](#)

**4. Trump impeachment: How Ukraine story unfolded**

27.11.2019 Mr Trump is accused of withholding nearly \$400m (£327m) in congressionally approved military aid to pressure Ukraine's new president into launching an inquiry into his 2020 Democratic rival Joe Biden and his son. But the US president denies doing anything wrong. [\(BBC\)](#)

**5. No free elections in eastern Ukraine if Russians stay: US envoy**

27.11.2019 Ahead of a crucial summit on eastern Ukraine in Paris, the US ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), James Gilmore, was cautiously optimistic about peace chances for the region. [\(DW\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- Both being accustomed to being in the public eye and conducting a unique campaign in the presidential and parliamentary elections (increase in digitalized campaigning in Ukraine), President Zelenskiy enshrined Ukrainians' memory. Volodymyr Zelenskiy's victory provided evidence that mastering the politicization of social networks is key.
- With this, bringing the "failed state" label, using the same rhetoric that Ukraine is dependent on the US, that its economy is in decline and Ukrainian people are "dull", Russia was effective in the propaganda and disinformation sphere.
- Mostly placing hot issues in a dilemma and stalling the time for diverting policy work's attention away, Russia seems to have a significant share in decreasing "Zelenskiy's approval rate" from 73 per cent to 52 per cent. Running out the clock, Russian attrition campaign appears to take firm steps forward.

**6. NSDC secretary not confirming Ukraine's readiness for direct talks with 'LPR/DPR'**

28.11.2019 It is currently impossible to say that Ukraine will agree to direct negotiations with the leadership of terrorist organizations "DPR" and "LPR," Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council Oleksiy Danilov has said. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**7. From 73 to 52 per cent: President Zelenskiy's approval rating is drastically falling – sociologists**

29.11.2019 In late November the share of Ukrainians who approve of the way President Zelenskiy is handling his job as President decreased to 52 per cent. At the same time the number of those disapproving of Zelenskiy performance grew reaching 36 per cent. [\(UKRAINE CRISIS\)](#)

**8. Apple 'taking a deeper look' at map policies after calling Crimea part of Russia – media**

30.11.2019 Apple Inc (AAPL.O) is "taking a deeper look at how we handle disputed borders" after it referred to the Russian-annexed Crimean Peninsula as part of Russia in its Maps and Weather apps for Russian users, a company spokeswoman said told Reuters on Friday. [\(UNIAN\)](#)

**9. Macron says Normandy Four summit to ensure security in Europe**

01.12.2019 "We are working on this with Chancellor Merkel. We will hold a Normandy summit on December 9 in order to implement the Minsk accords. I am sure that we will strengthen European sovereignty and build a new architecture of trust and security in Europe," Macron said. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**10. Democracy: How Social Networks Affect Politics In Ukraine**

28.11.2019 Social networks are no longer just platforms for the free flow of thoughts. Today, they are important and simple tools that help us achieve various goals, including political ones. This year, the presidential election saw a major increase in digitalized campaigning in Ukraine. [\(UKRAINE WORLD\)](#)

**11. The damage done to Ukraine**

01.12.2019 One easily overlooked aspect of the Ukraine affair is the ongoing damage it is doing to the young government of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who won a free and fair election in the spring by promising to tackle endemic corruption and end a grinding low-grade war with Russia and its proxies. [\(THE WASHINGTON POST\)](#)

**KEY DATES**

9 Dec 2019 - Normandy Summit (Paris)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Moscow releases Ukrainian Navy boats seized during ‘violation’ of Russian territorial waters near Crimea in 2018**

18.11.2019 Three Ukrainian military boats seized by the Russian border guards during an attempt to illegally pass through the Kerch Strait last year have been returned to Kiev, Moscow has announced. [\(RT\)](#)

**2. Moscow ‘Counting on’ France at Upcoming Meeting on Reaching Lasting Peace in East Ukraine – Lavrov**

18.11.2019 The conditions for a meeting of the leaders of the Normandy Four group of countries have “ripened,” and Moscow is hoping that summit host France will play its role in ‘removing any ambiguities’ regarding the peace process, during the talks, Sergei Lavrov has said. [\(SPUTNIK\)](#)

**3. Government amends Action Plan on implementation of Association Agreement with EU**

20.11.2019 The Cabinet of Ministers has approved a resolution amending the Action Plan on the implementation of association agreement with the European Union, the Government portal has reported. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**4. Disengagement in Donbas: invaders redeploy weapons on new positions**

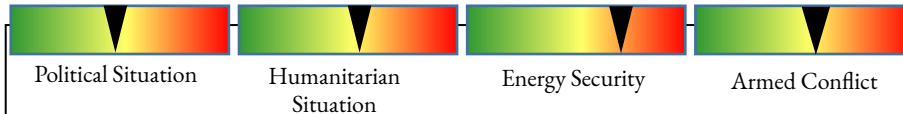
21.11.2019 Russian-occupation troops covertly redeploy weapons, which have to be withdrawn from the demarcation line, on new positions in the dark time. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**5. Kyiv set to create Minsk-type platform for negotiating Crimea’s return**

22.11.2019 A strategy is being elaborated for Crimea’s return to Ukraine, Permanent Representative of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for Crimea Anton Korynevych said. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**6. Impeachment inquiry: Trump ‘promoted discredited Ukraine theory’**

22.11.2019 It is illegal in the US to seek foreign help to gain electoral advantage. Mr Trump denies any wrongdoing. According to a discredited theory, it was Ukrainians or individuals with Ukrainian connections who had interfered in the 2016 vote, rather than Russia. [\(BBC\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- Among the developments in the recent days, the completion of a troop pullback near the frontline village of Petrivske by the Ukrainian government and the two Russia-backed “people’s republics” in Donbas has cleared the way for the meeting on December 9.
- Considering exclusively political and diplomatic methods of returning Crimea and de-occupying Donbas, Zelensky’s team elaborating a strategy for reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories and retaking control of Crimea.
- The Normandy Summit to be held in Paris appears to play a testing role for Zelensky’s presidency in regards to handling of the Donbas issue when his popularity has begun to fall and remind the world of the importance of the war in the Donbas causing tense relations between Russia and the West, which tends to be sidelined by other developments.

**7. EU strongly condemns Russian aggression and calls for free passage in Sea of Azov**

23.11.2019 Russia must ensure unhindered and free passage to and from the Sea of Azov in accordance with international law. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**8. What Hope for Ukraine and the Normandy Four Summit?**

19.11.2019 This four-way negotiation format (France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine) brought about the Minsk I and II agreements of 2014 and 2015 aimed at ending the war in eastern Ukraine. While the nitty-gritty of the actual implementation of Minsk II is being handled—as yet by and large unsuccessfully—by a number of working groups that convene regularly in Minsk and include representatives of the non-government-controlled areas in Ukraine, the Normandy format frames the negotiations and provides a communication channel to the rest of the world. [\(CARNEGIE EUROPE\)](#)

**9. Three months left to kill Nord Stream 2**

20.11.2019 Protecting Europe’s Energy Security Act has received overwhelming bipartisan support and proposes targeted sanctions to halt completion of Nord Stream 2, Russia President Vladimir Putin’s natural gas pipeline designed to control Europe. But there has been a procedural delay and time is running out. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**10. Ukrainians mark 6th anniversary of Euromaidan: How country has changed since revolution**

21.11.2019 The first Euromaidan protesters were indignant that Ukraine was stepping away from the path of European integration. Further on, the protests turned into the Revolution of Dignity directed against the Yanukovich regime as a whole. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**11. How to End the War in Ukraine**

21.11.2019 For more than five years, Russian forces and their proxies have waged a bloody war against Ukrainian forces in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine. The conflict has claimed more than 13,000 lives, driven almost two million people from their homes. [\(FOREIGN AFFAIRS\)](#)

**12. The Shoals of Ukraine**

22.11.2019 In fact, that Ukraine is at the center of this storm should not be surprising at all. Over the past quarter century, nearly all major efforts at establishing a durable post-Cold War order on the Eurasian continent have foundered on the shoals of Ukraine. [\(FOREIGN AFFAIRS\)](#)



**KEY DATES**

9 Dec 2019 - Normandy Summit (Paris)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Disengagement of troops in Bohdanivka and Petrivske completed**

11.11.2019 The practical disengagement of personnel, weapons and military equipment has been completed in the area of Bohdanivka and Petrivske localities in Donetsk region. The OSCE SMM is currently verifying the activities carried out. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**2. Ukrainian Forces, Separatists Complete Pullback From Frontline Area**

12.11.2019 Kyiv and Russia-backed separatists say they have completed a pullback of troops and weapons from a third frontline area in eastern Ukraine. The move is one of a series of confidence-building measures that could pave the way for a four-way summit aimed at ending the conflict in Luhansk and Donetsk regions that has killed more than 13,000 people since April 2014. [\(RFE/RL\)](#)

**3. Kyiv does not rule out its withdrawal from Minsk Agreements**

14.11.2019 Kyiv allows for the possibility of its "withdrawal from the Minsk Agreements," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said in an interview with the BBC Ukrainian service. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**4. Military threats to Ukraine in Black, Azov Seas constantly growing**

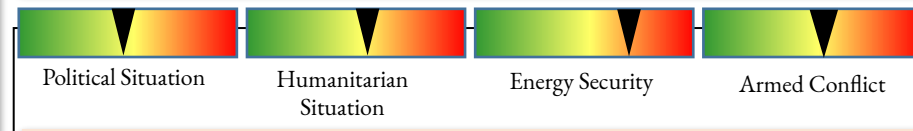
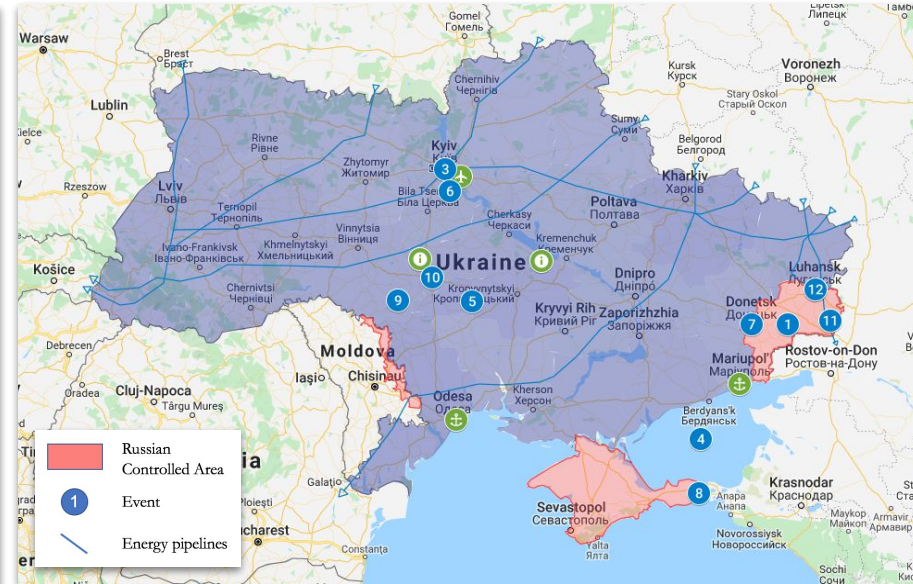
14.11.2019 Ukrainian Defense Minister says military threats to Ukraine in the Black and Azov Seas are constantly growing. "It is symbolic that just yesterday, for the first time in the history of Ukraine, two Island-type boats provided by the U.S. government joined our Navy" [\(UNIAN\)](#)

**5. Newly released transcript of first Trump-Zelensky call raises additional questions**

15.11.2019 The White House hopes to show that there was nothing untoward in the US-Ukraine relationship by releasing a rough transcript of President Trump's first call with Ukrainian President Zelensky. [\(CNN\)](#)

**6. Leaders of Russia, Ukraine to meet to discuss conflict**

15.11.2019 The leaders of Russia, Ukraine, Germany and France will meet in Paris on Dec. 9 to try to seek a settlement for the five-year conflict in eastern Ukraine that has killed 13,000 people. French President Macron's office announced the meeting Friday after months of diplomatic efforts to get all sides to agree on new talks. [\(AP\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- On the one hand, Russia's decision to return the seized ships back to Ukraine and the withdrawal of Ukraine's troops and Russian-backed separatists are two of a series of confidence-building measures that could pave the way for a summit working up to end the conflict in Luhansk and Donetsk regions. On the other hand Putin starts grumbling at the special status of Donbas. Recalling that the law on a special status for Donbas expires on December 31, Putin stresses that if adoption of new law on a special status for Donbas is not agreed with 'LPR' and 'DPR' then everything will instantly go into a deadlock. Bringing the crux on the table, it seems that Putin wants to strengthen his hand to play his cards well in the summit announced to be held on December 9.
- Considering the gains obtained so far such as pullback of troops and weapons from a third frontline area, beginning of mine clearance in the area and the time elapsed from the last four-way talks (October 2016), the war-torn Donbas appears to remain under a fair sum of stress in the next days.

**7. Putin demands Ukraine extend law on special status for Donbas**

15.11.2019 Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that Ukraine should extend the law on a special status for Donbas. "We hear from the leaders of Ukraine that another law on a special status for Donbas may be adopted. Which one? This is an absolutely key thing. If they approve something that is not agreed with 'LPR' and 'DPR,' then everything will instantly go into a deadlock," he said. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**8. Russia says it will return captured naval ships to Ukraine on Monday**

17.11.2019 Russia will return three captured naval ships to Ukraine on Monday and is moving them to a handover location agreed with Kiev, Crimea's border guard service was cited as saying by Russian news agencies. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**9. Congress, Nord Stream II, and Ukraine**

12.11.2019 Congress has long weighed sanctions as a tool to block the Nord Stream II gas pipeline under the Baltic Sea from Russia to Germany. Unfortunately, it has mulled the question too long, and time has run out. [\(BROOKINGS\)](#)

**10. Ukraine's new economic policy juggles populism with libertarianism**

12.11.2019 Following the political blitzkrieg in Ukraine that gave President Volodymyr Zelensky's team a single-party majority in parliament, the new authorities have set about implementing their social and economic pledges. Upon assuming office, Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk promised economic growth of 5 to 8 percent a year. [\(CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER\)](#)

**11. Eight obstacles to Ukraine achieving peace with Russia**

13.11.2019 There are eight obstacles to Zelensky achieving peace with Russia. The first is Russia's view of Ukraine which Zelensky does not seem to understand. Moscow's view of Ukrainians has degraded to the White Guardist stance of denying that Ukrainians exist which is worse than in the Soviet era. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**12. The Normandy Summit is finally on**

15.11.2019 A critical moment has arrived for the long-stalled negotiations over the future of eastern Ukraine. Frustrated with lack of progress, Ukraine's representatives have pledged to give the moribund Normandy Four format one last chance. On the surface, there has finally been a breakthrough permitting the resumption of negotiations between the leaders of Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Volker tells Congress he was concerned by Trump's July 25 conversation with Zelensky**

06.11.2019 Former U.S. Special Representative to Ukraine for Negotiations Kurt Volker, when testifying in Congress in connection with the impeachment inquiry of U.S. President Donald Trump, said that Trump's telephone conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on July 25 made a discouraging impression ([INTERFAX](#))

**2. Ukraine, EU to discuss possible changes to Association Agreement on Nov 18-19**

07.11.2019 Ukraine and the European Union will hold a meeting of the EU-Ukraine Association Committee in Brussels on November 18-19 to discuss all aspects of trade and possible changes to the Association Agreement. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**3. Ukraine intends to submit updated draft resolution on Crimea to UN General Assembly**

07.11.2019 The occupying power restores the nuclear infrastructure in Crimea, thereby violating Ukraine's previously declared nuclear-weapon-free status. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**4. Ukraine ready for conclusion of FTA with UK, and hard Brexit – trade representative**

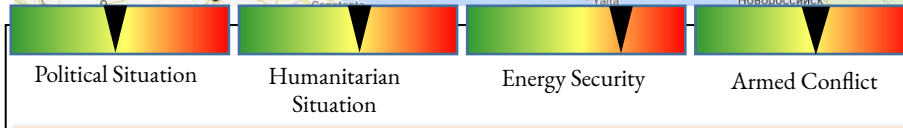
07.11.2019 Ukraine is ready for conclusion of a free trade agreement with the United Kingdom and for economic cooperation in the face of hard Brexit. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**5. UN court says it has jurisdiction in Ukraine-Russia case**

08.11.2019 In a legal victory for Kyiv, the United Nations' highest court ruled Friday that it has jurisdiction in a case brought by Ukraine alleging that Russia breached treaties on terrorist financing and racial discrimination in eastern Ukraine and Crimea. ([AP](#))

**6. New military pullback begins in eastern Ukraine**

09.11.2019 The Saturday pullback in the Petrivske area follows two similar movements in eastern Ukraine, where Russia-backed rebels and Ukrainian forces have been fighting since 2014. The withdrawals are seen as a significant step that could lead to a summit of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany on ending the conflict. ([AP](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- Although set for last weekend, the Petrivske withdrawal was carried out on 09 November due to ceasefire violations by the rebels. The Saturday pullback in the Petrivske area and the last week's withdrawal in Zolote are seen as a significant step that could lead to a summit of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany on ending the conflict. After Ukraine and Russia exchanged 35 prisoners to the other side in September, tensions have shown signs of easing. But final resolution (when and how elections could be held in the rebel territories) remains elusive and argument continues.
- While the developments in Eastern Ukraine are hope-inspiring, Russian Federation activities in Crimea seem ominous. Restoration of nuclear infrastructure in Crimea by Russia and the deployment of systems capable of carrying nuclear weapons that violate Ukraine's previously declared nuclear-weapon-free status appears to be problematic issue in mid terms.

**7. Trump says he'll release transcript of a second call with Ukrainian president Tuesday**

09.11.2019 President Donald Trump on Saturday said he plans to release a transcript of a second phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday, one that occurred months before the July call that kickstarted House Democrats' impeachment inquiry. ([POLITICO](#))

**OPINIONS**

**8. Five months into Ukrainian President Zelensky's term, there are reasons for optimism and caution**

04.11.2019 How do Ukrainians assess the performance and prospects of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, now five months in office, as he tackles the country's two largest challenges: resolving the war with Russia and implementing economic and anti-corruption reforms? In two words: cautious optimism. Many retain the optimism they felt when Zelenskiy swept into office this spring, elected with more than 70% of the vote. ([BROOKINGS](#))

**9. What Nord Stream 2 means for Europe**

05.11.2019 Nord Stream 2 is controversial. The pipeline will have some benefits for Germany: it provides more transit gas flows and an additional supply option if alternative routes are disrupted. However, with Nord Stream 2, it is possible to reduce gas flows through Ukraine. Once both Nord Stream 2 and Turkish Stream come online, there will be a non-Ukrainian transit capacity of 205.9 bcm per year available for Russian gas exports to Europe. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**10. Minsk Protocol is not the only option: Resistance Movement against Capitulation presents Ukraine's Security and Peace Doctrine**

06.11.2019 On November 4, 2019 the Resistance Movement against Capitulation presented the Ukrainian Security and Piece Doctrine. The document was drafted by members of the Movement's strategic council that includes experts in international law and diplomats. What the document is about and how the vision expressed is different from the position of President Zelensky's ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))

**11. Ukraine Needs More Than Lethal Aid From the United States**

08.11.2019 The real-life Zelensky's deferential posture now features in an international scandal. In August, a whistleblower reported that President Trump threatened to withhold nearly \$400 million in promised military aid until the Ukrainian president delivered dirt on Joe Biden's supposed corrupt activities in Ukraine. ([FOREIGN AFFAIRS](#))





## UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

Russia-Ukraine Conflict  
(28 Oct - 03 Nov 2019)

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. OSCE Representative: Troop Withdrawal In Eastern Ukraine A 'Big Step Forward'

29.10.2019 Kyiv and Russia-backed separatists have begun withdrawing troops and weapons from a front-line area in eastern Ukraine, as part of a plan to end the Donbas region's five-year conflict. ([RFE/RL](#))

#### 2. Hungary nixes NATO statement on Ukraine over minority rights spat

30.10.2019 Hungary has vetoed a joint NATO statement about Ukraine because it didn't mention the "deprivation of rights" of the Hungarian minority in the neighboring country. ([RT](#))

#### 3. Hungary unblocks NATO's statement on Ukraine

31.10.2019 The Hungarian government has unblocked the adoption of the NATO-Ukraine joint statement at the very last moment as Hungary's proposals were taken into account. ([UNIAN](#))

#### 4. NATO-Ukraine Commission meets in Kyiv: key statements

01.11.2019 On October 31, the NATO-Ukraine Commission met in Kyiv in the presence of the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky. The NATO-Ukraine Commission that met in Kyiv on October 31 released a joint statement. The document stipulates the urge to end the war in Donbas, return the territory under Ukraine's control as well as bring the annexed Crimea back to Ukraine. It also contains the paragraphs that regard the Hungary-Ukraine conflict over the language clause in the law of Ukraine on education. ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))

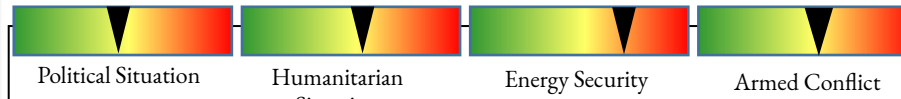
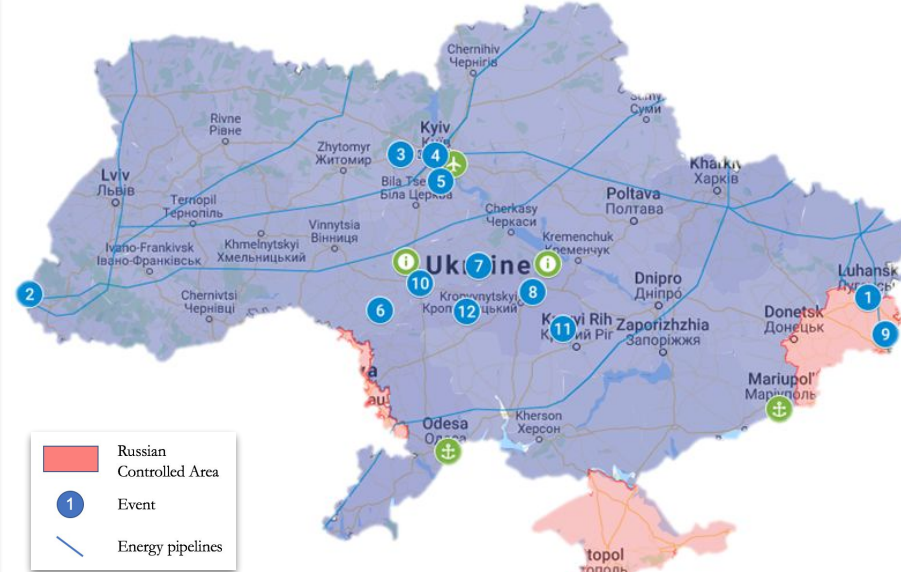
#### 5. Ukraine plans to continue cooperation with NATO in five areas

31.10.2019 Ukraine plans to continue its cooperation with NATO in five strategic areas.

"Ukraine further plans to focus its cooperation with the Alliance on these five strategic areas," Vice Prime Minister of Ukraine for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Dmytro Kuleba said at a joint briefing with NATO Assistant Secretary General Bettina Cadenbach, an Ukrinform correspondent reports. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 6. Doors to NATO membership for Ukraine are open – Stoltenberg

31.10.2019 NATO General Secretary Jens Stoltenberg has again emphasized that the doors of the military alliance are open for those wanting to join, including Ukraine. He said this during a speech in Ukraine's parliament on Thursday. ([INTERFAX](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- Disrupted many times by ceasefire violations, troop withdrawals of both sides in Donbas region could not be achieved so far. But the official statement putting a smile on many people's face has come from Ukrainian Joint Forces Operation (JCO) and Russian State Agency (RIA). From the contact line in Zolote, troops started to withdraw on Tuesday. This action with the intention of bringing peace and tranquility into region seems to promise hope. Good news has come from Azov sea port of Mariupol by Ukrainian Foreign Minister telling that Kiev is ready for one more disengagement in the same region, in the city of Petrovske. Helping achieve a lasting ceasefire for the region, "Normandy Format" appears to prove once more to be effective in solution seeking efforts in the hot spot.
- Reiterating NATO's unwavering support to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, The NATO-Ukraine Commission (NUC) met in Kyiv on 31 October. Seeing Ukraine as the key for Euro-Atlantic security, NUC looks to enhance and adapt distinctive partnership based on Ukraine's aspirations for NATO membership.

#### 7. State Department agrees to produce some Ukraine records by November 22

31.10.2019 The State Department has agreed to produce some Ukraine-related documents by November 22, according to a joint court filing Wednesday night from the department and watchdog group American Oversight. ([CNN](#))

#### 8. Nord Stream 2: Go-ahead for Russian gas pipeline angers Ukraine

31.10.2019 Denmark's approval for a controversial pipeline to pump more Russian gas into Europe will strengthen Russia's influence in the region, Ukraine warns. ([BBC](#))

#### 9. Ukraine announces completion of withdrawal of forces and weapons near Zolote in Donbas

01.11.2019 Ukraine has announced the completion of the withdrawal of forces and weapons at disengagement site No. 2 near the village of Zolote-4 in Luhansk region. ([UNIAN](#))

#### 10. Trudeau: Canada will always support Ukraine

02.11.2019 "We will always stand with Ukraine and the Ukrainian Canadian community. I look forward to working together to create a better future for both peoples," Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau said. ([UKRINFORM](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 11. This should be Zelensky's next big push

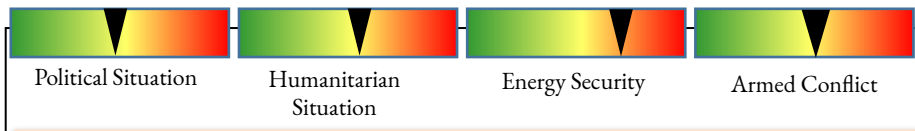
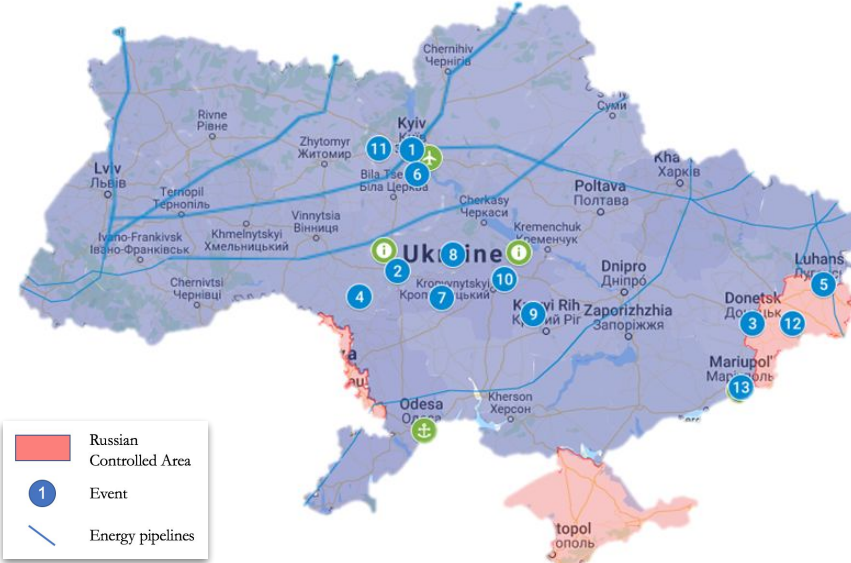
29.10.2019 Reforming Ukraine's security services is among the most urgent and challenging tasks facing the country. The country clearly needs to improve its overall intelligence capabilities to counter Russia's continuing tactics of subversion and destabilization. These tools remain central to Moscow's efforts to pull Ukraine back into the Russian orbit. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

#### 12. Fighting corruption in Ukraine: USAID's strategy

31.10.2019 There is no question that corruption is prevalent. The 2018 Transparency International corruption index ranks Ukraine 120 out of 180 countries. The 2019-2024 USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategy for Ukraine categorizes Ukraine as the most corrupt country in Europe and sets anti-corruption as one of four strategic objectives for its assistance programs for Ukraine. ([BROOKINGS](#))

**KEY EVENTS**

- 1. Kremlin: Ukraine sending Moscow conflicting signals on peace plan**  
20.10.2019 The Kremlin said on Monday that Kiev had sent Russia mixed signals about the war in eastern Ukraine despite agreeing to a peace plan and that no progress had been made on organizing an international summit aimed at finding a resolution. [\(REUTERS\)](#)
- 2. Ukraine’s infamous ultra-nationalist group Azov says US lawmakers SLANDERED them by saying they inspire terrorism**  
21.10.2019 A state-sponsored Ukrainian ultra-nationalist paramilitary unit with neo-Nazi roots has accused a group of US lawmakers of slander after they suggested it should be listed as a terrorist organization. [\(RT\)](#)
- 3. Law on special status of Donbas will be written in Ukraine’s parliament, in dialogue with the people, not outside of Ukraine – Servant of the People**  
21.10.2019 The law on the special status of Donbas will be developed in parliament in dialogue with society and not outside of Ukraine, member of parliament from the Servant of the People Party faction Oleksandr Kachura has said. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)
- 4. Ukraine recognized as poorest country in Europe in 2019, study reveals**  
22.10.2019 Ukraine takes last place in a 42-member list with a per capita purchasing power of 1.830 euros. Ukraine has been placed last in a list of countries by purchasing power among the 42 countries in Europe. [\(TASS\)](#)
- 5. Trump is about to give Putin another gift**  
22.10.2019 Another critical legacy of the post-Cold War era may be on the verge of biting the dust now that President Donald Trump’s administration is planning to withdraw from the Treaty on Open Skies. [\(CNN\)](#)
- 6. Rada prepares letter to U.S. Congress with proposal to provide all info on Azov battalion**  
24.10.2019 Head of the Verkhovna Rada Foreign Policy Committee Bohdan Yaremenko has prepared a draft letter to 40 American congressmen who called on U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to include the Azov battalion on the list of terrorist organizations. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)
- 7. NATO and Ukraine launch new format of cooperation**  
25.10.2019 NATO and Ukraine have agreed to launch a new format of cooperation “One Country - One Plan” which will embrace all previous developments and consolidate them within a single structure of control and coordination. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Allowing member states to conduct unarmed surveillance over one another's territories and helping verify arms control agreements, “Treaty on Open Skies” is on the President Donald Trump’s agenda to be withdrawn. Signed by 34 nations, the treaty is allowing especially American surveillance aircrafts to keep track of Russia’s military buildup in Eastern Ukraine. Negotiations on special status of Donbas is proceeding, but as a signatory to the treaty Ukraine has benefited from intelligence gleaned from overflights based on the treaty. In case of US withdrawal from this treaty, it appears that Russia’s military activities would not be affected but Ukraine would lose one of its main tools in the conflict.*
- *With the agreement between NATO and Ukraine a new format of cooperation (“One Country-One Plan”) has been launched. Bringing possible Russia’s reactions along, Ukraine seems to be consistent and unwavering on the way to membership of NATO.*

- 8. By pressing Zelensky for political favors, Trump upended US support for ‘rule of law’ in Ukraine**  
25.10.2019 Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, the US, European leaders and the International Monetary Fund have pressed Ukraine to make its judiciary truly independent as a prerequisite for much-needed aid. [\(CNN\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

- 9. Is Europe giving up on Ukraine?**  
21.10.2019 There are worrying signs that the big players in the European Union may be ready to give up on Ukraine. April 2019 marked the fifth anniversary of the conflict in the Donbas, and while deliberations were recently held to try and resolve this crisis, France and Germany have signaled their fatigue with the conflict and a desire to return to a normal relationship with Moscow. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)
- 10. Trump impeachment: US envoy condemns ‘irregular’ pressure on Ukraine**  
22.10.2019 A top US diplomat says President Trump made the release of military aid to Ukraine conditional on a pledge that a political rival would be investigated. [\(BBC\)](#)
- 11. Ukraine’s cut of state funding to parties reverted step towards de-oligarchization of politics**  
22.10.2019 In July 2016, legislation on prevention and countering political corruption was amended in a way that foresaw providing state financing for statutory party activity and expenditure on pre-election campaigns. The changes came into force at the beginning of 2017. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)
- 12. Zelensky finds that there are no easy solutions in Donbas**  
23.10.2019 The president has attempted to use the so-called Steinmeier Formula to find a compromise on holding elections in the east of Ukraine. But he has run into a stark reality: Moscow and Kyiv’s interests remain irreconcilable. [\(NEW EUROPE CENTER\)](#)
- 13. Ukraine’s new parliament is moving fast but is it getting anywhere?**  
23.10.2019 Ukraine’s new parliament has been in session for more than fifty days and it’s been operating at a frantic pace. The ruling party seems to value speed over substance. It’s hard to keep up with the parliament, which has passed about 70 bills since taking office. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)





### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Ukraine sees hope for 'last chance' peace summit in mid-November

15.10.2019 The leaders of Ukraine, Russia, France and Germany could hold a summit in Paris in mid-November if Kiev and pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine can maintain a ceasefire, Ukraine's foreign minister said on Monday, warning of a "last chance" for Moscow. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 2. Meeting of NATO working group takes place in Kyiv

14.10.2019 The purpose of the group's work is the development of NATO normative documents on program and project management used in the weapons and military equipment life cycle management system. The group is designed to develop guidance documents, policies, methods, procedures, standard models (templates) of NATO. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 3. 'No to capitulation! Death to our enemies!' Nationalists march in Kiev against roadmap to peace in Ukraine

15.10.2019 Ukrainian nationalists marched in Kiev to mark the anniversary of a Nazi-collaborating WWII militia. Many used the occasion to protest the so-called Steinmeier Formula – arguably Ukraine's best chance for peace ([RT](#))

#### 4. New schedule of disengagement of forces in Donbas discussed, but no agreement reached - OSCE

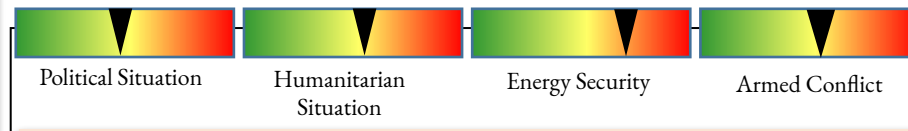
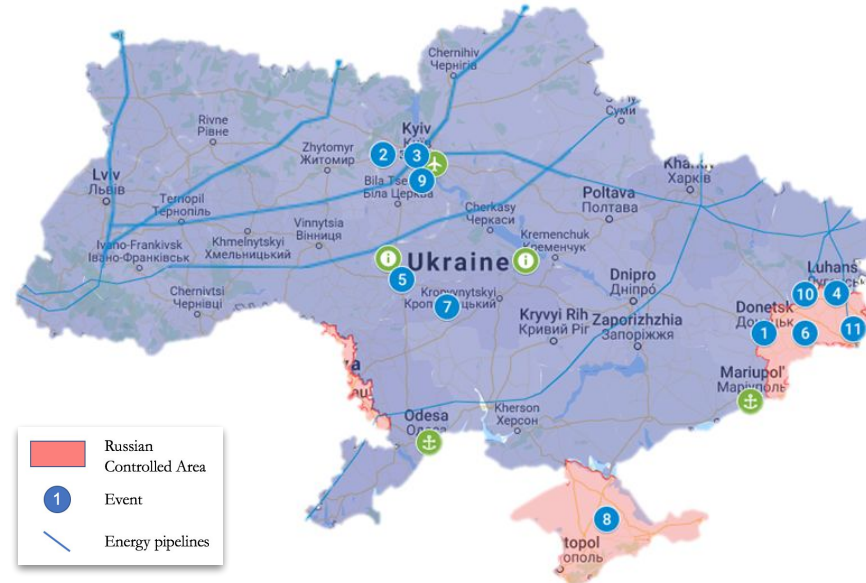
15.10.2019 The Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine was unable to agree on the new schedule of the disengagement of forces in Petrivske and Zolote, but Kyiv and Donbas have not abandoned these plans. OSCE Special Representative to the TCG Martin Sajdik told journalists that unfortunately, the parties failed to perform the disengagement of forces in Petrivske and Zolote agreed upon at the group's previous meeting. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 5. Why the October 14 March is not just nationalist

16.10.2019 On Monday, October 14 the country marked Ukraine's Defenders Day that is on calendar for the fifth year in a row. The holiday was established as the former "Soviet" Day of Fatherland Defenders was suspended. ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))

#### 6. Zelensky's idea to dissolve DPR, LPR unexpected for other Normandy Four participants - Kremlin

16.10.2019 Kiev's idea about the dissolution of the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics (DPR and LPR) is unexpected for other participants of the Normandy format, so it is yet difficult to comment on it, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Wednesday. ([SPUTNIK](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- 'No to capitulation! Death to our enemies!' are some slogans used in nationalists march in Kiev protesting against roadmap to peace in Ukraine. Chanting aggressive slogans and branding the Ukrainian leader Zelensky a "traitor", the nationalists denounce the peace plan as a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Uniting totally different individuals, protests become frequent as life-changing developments in Ukraine are unfolding. It shows once more that *striving to bring the stalled peace process out of a deadlock is not that easy considering the reactions of Ukrainians.*

#### 7. Warrior Watcher 2019: First Ukrainian-British exercises kick off in Mykolayiv

17.10.2019 The exercises are held with the participation of representatives of the Naval Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the British Armed Forces. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 8. US at OSCE: Russia contravenes all Helsinki Final Act's founding principles by occupying Crimea

19.10.2019 Having seized Crimea illegally in 2014, Russia contravened all ten of the Helsinki Final Act's founding principles, including the principle of inviolability of borders. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 9. Why the Trump-Ukraine scandal isn't dominating the news in Ukraine

19.10.2019 On Friday an English-language Ukrainian paper called the Kyiv Post made a splash on social media with an arresting front page. With a red headline, "Shady Cast of Characters: Engineers of Trump-Ukraine Scandal," the entire front page was filled with photos of everyone allegedly connected to the scandal currently engulfing the Trump administration and Ukraine and which has led House Democrats to look into impeaching Trump. ([CNN](#))

#### 10. EU doesn't recognise Russian passports issued to residents of Donbas

19.10.2019 The European Union does not recognise the Russian passports issued to Ukrainian citizens in the occupied Donbas under simplified procedure and calls on all member states to act likewise. This is underscored in the EU Statement on "Russia's Ongoing Aggression against Ukraine and Illegal Occupation of Crimea" which was made public at the OSCE Permanent Council meeting in Vienna. ([UKRINFORM](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 11. Sanctions against Russia: Current status, prospects, successes and gaps in the multilateral international sanctions regime against the Russian Federation

19.10.2019 This paper constitutes an in-depth study of the current sanctions mechanism of the EU and the USA against the Russian Federation. It offers a general overview of what sanctions are, why they are useful, how they are currently being used and what their effect is. The general goal of this paper is to establish where sanctions are lacking and how their application can be improved in order to optimise the results. ([UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS](#))

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Second whistleblower comes forward in Trump-Ukraine scandal**

05.10.2019 The existence of a second whistleblower, who claims to have firsthand knowledge of Trump’s dealings with Ukraine, could add to pressure on the US president and aid an impeachment inquiry against him. [\(DW\)](#)

**2. Thousands rally in Kiev to protest autonomy plan for eastern Ukraine**

06.10.2019 Thousands of people gathered in Kiev’s main square on Sunday to protest against President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s deal with Moscow to grant autonomy to Ukraine’s pro-Russian rebel-held east as part of efforts to end a five-year conflict there. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**3. Germany & Ukraine agree conditions for new Normandy Four meeting are met – Merkel’s spokesman**

08.10.2019 Merkel and Zelenskiy agreed that all the prerequisites for such a gathering had been met after the contact group on Donbass agreed on further troop withdrawal and approved the so-called ‘Steinmeier Formula’ earlier this month, spokesman Steffen Seibert confirmed. [\(RT\)](#)

**4. Ukraine peace drive hits first bump, but Moscow says summit possible**

08.10.2019 Ukraine on Wednesday refused to pull back troops in its restive east, saying for the second time this week that continued shelling by pro-Russian separatists there precluded the implementation of a disengagement agreement. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**5. Ukraine’s Zelenskiy plays hot and cold with Trump team**

08.10.2019 Ukraine’s president appears to be playing to both sides of the American political divide, hedging his bets to ensure U.S. financial and military aid keeps flowing no matter who wins next year’s election. [\(AP\)](#)

**6. Zelenskiy: Donbas peacekeeping mission to be discussed in Normandy Format**

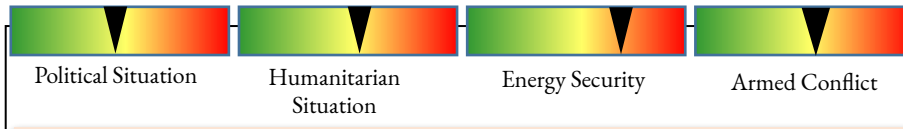
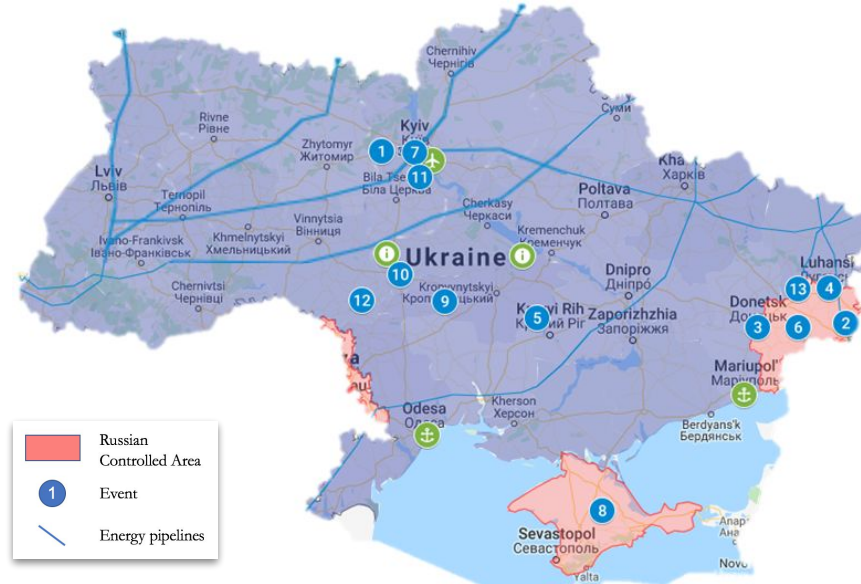
09.10.2019 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said that the possibility of deploying a peacekeeping contingent in Donbas will be discussed at a meeting in the Normandy Format (which consists of Ukraine, Germany, France, and Russia). [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**7. Mogherini: EU attention to Ukraine not weakening, because problems not disappeared**

09.10.2019 The European Union’s attention to Ukraine has not weakened at all, as it may seem, and the problems associated with this country have not disappeared, High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini has stated. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**8. Mogherini states that Crimea and Donbas are Ukraine**

09.10.2019 Meetings of the Trilateral Contact Group in Minsk and the approval of the so-called “Steinmeier formula” open up the possibility of a more active search for a peaceful settlement in Donbas. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- The envoys from Moscow and Kiev agreed on Tuesday on an election schedule for the Donbass region and on legislation giving it special status.
- As peace efforts accelerate to find a permanent solution to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, split in opinion on some weighty matters also shows up. The idea of “giving autonomy to Donbas” is added to agenda (judicially 300 votes are needed to change the Constitution and give autonomy to Donbas. But Zelenskiy’s party “Servant of the People” holds a majority of 251 seats in the Ukrainian parliament).
- The idea of “autonomous Donbas” after fair and free elections in Eastern Ukraine seems not be looked with favour by all segments of Ukraine society. Describing it as “betrayal by Zelenskiy”, protesters look to be considered on this touchy subject.
- Ukraine also agreed to call back its forces from the current contact line with separatist claiming Russia to do the same for its troops. It would appear that the statement of Zelenskiy “elections in Donbass would be held only after all Russian troops had left” is “the tar baby” of this hot issue because Russia denies having troops there.

**9. Zelenskiy plans to grant partial citizenship to ethnic Ukrainians**

10.10.2019 Ethnic Ukrainians, who live abroad and are citizens of other countries, could be granted partial citizenship of Ukraine. “We have already practically elaborate a structure for giving the ethnic Ukrainians living in any world country an opportunity to become partially Ukrainian citizens, that is, granting partial citizenship to them. The main problem is that they want to remain citizens of those countries.” President Zelenskiy [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**10. Ukraine’s game of chess: one win, one loss & one draw**

05.10.2019 Ukraine is currently playing three chess games on three different chess boards: one related to economy, the second to the war, and the third to justice. These are the key topics on Ukraine’s agenda. The games are being played by three separate teams with different motivations, experience and competence. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**11. Did Zelenskiy give in to Moscow? We don’t know yet**

07.10.2019 For more than five years, Russia has used its military and proxy forces to wage a low-intensity but still very real war in eastern Ukraine. Newly-elected Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy would like to end that conflict. On October 1, he announced an agreement based on the “Steinmeier Formula” to advance a settlement. Angry crowds took to the streets of Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities over the weekend to denounce the agreement, equating it with capitulation to Moscow. But is it? At this point, not enough is known about details of the agreement—or even if the agreement will hold—to reach a judgment. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**12. Specter of Revolution Looms Over Moves Toward Peace in Ukraine**

09.10.2019 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s team has come up against its first serious problems since triumphantly sweeping to power. Massive street protests have broken out in Kiev under the slogan of “No Capitulation!” in response to the Steinmeier formula signed in Minsk and aimed at ending the conflict in Ukraine’s Donbas region. There is even talk of another Maidan revolution. [\(CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER\)](#)

**13. Ukraine conflict: Can election deal in east finally bring peace?**

10.10.2019 Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has backed in principle an agreement to bring elections to the territories controlled by Russian-backed separatists in the east. It is hoped that the deal will eventually lead to peace in the Donbas region devastated by more than five years of fighting. But thousands of Ukrainian nationalists have held protests. [\(BBC\)](#)



**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Kiev agrees to EU-backed roadmap aimed at pushing peace settlement for eastern Ukraine**

30.09.2019 The government in Kiev has agreed to the so-called ‘Steinmeier Formula,’ the process for Ukraine’s breakaway eastern regions to receive autonomy, which is expected to revitalize the stalled peace process. [\(RT\)](#)

**2. Ukraine signs key agreement with pro-Russia separatists**

30.09.2019 Ukraine has signed an agreement with pro-Russia separatists allowing for local elections to be held in separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine. It could pave the way for further peace talks. [\(DW\)](#)

**3. Breakthrough at talks opens way to summit on Ukraine conflict**

01.10.2019 A breakthrough at talks between Moscow and Kiev has opened the way to the first international summit in three years being convened on ending fighting in east Ukraine. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**4. Steinmeier formula could hopefully lead to further efforts towards full implementation of Minsk agreements by all parties – European Union**

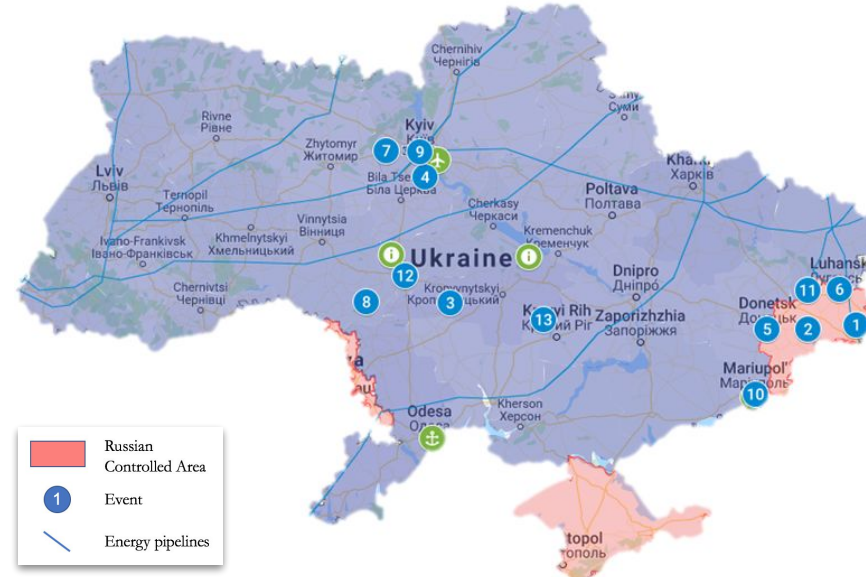
01.10.2019 The European Union believes that the so-called Steinmeier formula may lead to further efforts to fully implement the Minsk agreements. "The outcome of the Trilateral Contact Group deliberations in Minsk yesterday, including with regard to the so-called Steinmeier formula, is a step that could hopefully lead to further efforts towards the full implementation of the Minsk agreements by all parties," she said. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**5. EU publishes visa rules for residents of occupied Donbas**

02.10.2019 The EU has published rules for applying for Schengen visas for residents of non-government controlled areas of Ukraine’s Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as guidance on how to handle visa applications from Russian passport holders who reside in these territories and received Russian documents after the Russian presidential decree of April 24 [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**6. UWC calls on Zelensky to maintain clear position on Donbas, course towards NATO and sanctions against Russia**

02.10.2019 The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) has urged President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky to maintain a clear and unequivocal position regarding the holding of elections in the Russian-occupied territories of Donbas, Ukraine’s course towards the EU and NATO, as well as the continuation of anti-Russian sanctions. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Having been protested by some Ukrainian nationalists on Kyiv’s Maidan square, development on the signature of the agreement between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russia separatists seems to be a great white hope. The agreement (called Steinmeier formula) not only allows for local elections to be held in separatist-controlled territory in eastern Ukraine, it could also pave the way for further peace talks.*
- *Preparation to withdraw troops from two locations in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions to let the elections to be held in safe and secure environment is probably the most concrete step taken in the region so far.*
- *Besides local elections, this agreement foresees a “special status” of now occupied lands in Eastern Ukraine after re-integration. Stating that the special status will be applied temporarily when the local election starts, and permanently once they are evaluated as valid by the OSCE, which seems to play a “pacifier” role.*
- *It shouldn’t be ruled out that Kremlin might act in line with its own interpretations of the international law and the signed agreement when it comes to the demilitarization of the region and providing the conditions for a referendum.*

**7. Volker urged Ukrainians not to interfere in US politics after Trump call**

02.10.2019 The former US special envoy for Ukraine told House investigators that he urged Ukraine’s leadership not to interfere in US politics in a conversation that followed the phone call between President Donald Trump and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky. [\(CNN\)](#)

**8. Ukraine conflict: Zelensky plans frontline troop withdrawal**

03.10.2019 Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky plans to pull Ukrainian troops back all along the front line in the east, if Russian-backed rebels reciprocate. [\(BBC\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**9. The dueling US foreign policy approaches to Ukraine pose a risk for Kyiv**

29.09.2019 The Trump administration apparently has pursued two foreign policy approaches toward Ukraine since at least early 2019. One has sought to advance traditional U.S. national interests. The second has sought to advance prospects for President Donald Trump’s reelection in 2020. [\(BROOKINGS\)](#)

**10. Ukraine’s President Can’t Avoid Showdown With His Oligarch Backer**

01.10.2019 Kolomoisky has been making use of his ambiguous position as the future president’s business partner since the very start of Zelensky’s election campaign, but this didn’t prevent Zelensky from sweeping to victory in the elections. [\(CARNegie MOSCOW CENTER\)](#)

**11. Ukraine Accepts Compromises on Donbas: Is this Good or Bad?**

02.10.2019 On October 1st, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that Ukraine has agreed to the so-called “Steinmeier formula”. This formula is a point of one of the hottest debates in Ukraine; it raises fears that it lately leads to Ukraine’s “capitulation” to Russia on occupied Donbas lands. [\(UKRAINE WORLD\)](#)

**12. The “Steinmeier Formula”: Zelensky’s huge mistake**

02.10.2019 The Kremlin has launched a torpedo attack called the “Steinmeier Formula”, which will eventually lead to the defeat of Zelensky’s strategy. What has happened these past few days can be called a huge mistake that borders on crime. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**13. Ukraine’s Geopolitical Importance Is Getting Lost**

03.10.2019 It is easy to get lost in the domestic side of the firestorm over President Donald Trump’s ill-advised phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in July. The House’s impeachment inquiry will lead every news broadcast for the foreseeable future. What is missing in much of the conversation, however, is consideration of the geopolitical importance of Ukraine, and how the scandal will affect the uncertain future of that nation and its region. [\(BLOOMBERG\)](#)



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Ahead of Trump meet, Ukraine fears being dragged into Washington bear pit

22.09.2019 A trip to the United States that began as a golden opportunity for Ukraine to burnish relations with its most powerful international backer has turned into a diplomatic tightrope walk for President Zelenskiy. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 2. Trump's transcript tells the whole story, I don't want to interfere with US elections: Ukrainian President Zelensky

24.09.2019 President Trump released a transcript of a July phone call with Zelensky, during which Democrats allege Trump pressured the Ukrainian leader to reopen an investigation into Joe Biden's son Hunter's supposedly corrupt business dealings in the country. ([RT](#))

#### 3. Volodymyr Zelenskyy: My task is to end the war in Donbas and return all the occupied territories, but not at the cost of freedom and the right of Ukraine to its own choice

24.09.2019 Speaking during the General Debate of the 74th session of the UN General Assembly in New York (USA), the Head of State stressed that the war in Donbas had already lasted five years and five years had passed since Russia annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea. But despite the existence of international law and hundreds of organizations designed to defend it, Ukraine defends its own sovereignty and territorial integrity with weapons in its hands and losing its citizens. ([UKRAINIAN PRESIDENCY](#))

#### 4. EU spokesman: We have put together largest support package for Ukraine in EU history

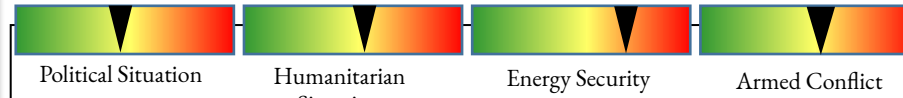
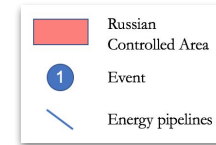
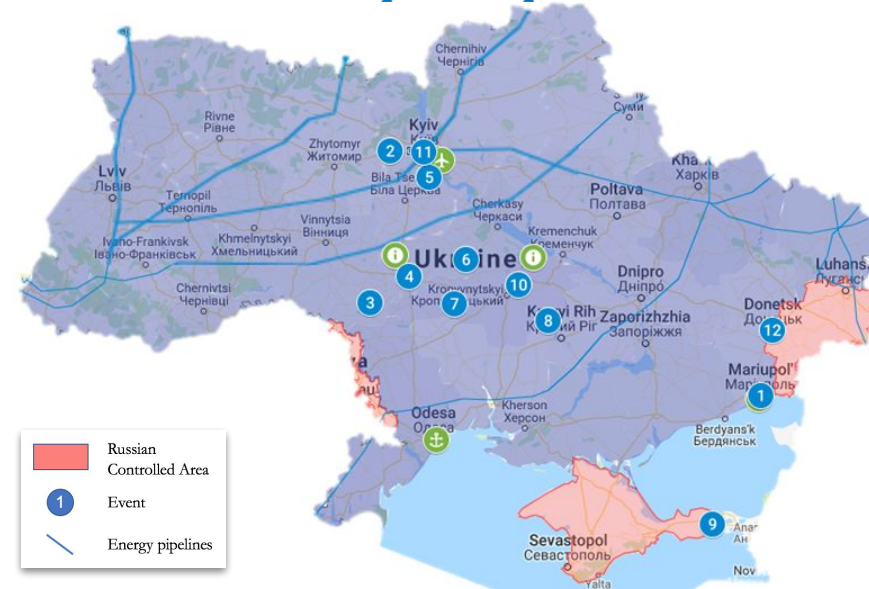
25.09.2019 European Commission spokesperson Carlos Martin Ruiz de Gordejuela has called unprecedented the assistance the EU has provided to Ukraine over the past five years. He commented on the content of a phone conversation between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during which critical remarks were made about the European Union and its individual leaders. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 5. IMF mission completes work in Ukraine

25.09.2019 A mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) completes its work in Ukraine and a statement on the results of its work in the country is to be published on September 27. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 6. How Ukrainians are reacting to the Zelenskiy-Trump affair

25.09.2019 While Ukrainian government figures have downplayed the controversial phone call between Zelenskiy and US President Trump, some opposition figures have lambasted the Ukrainian leader's conduct. ([DW](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- *Nowadays a phone call remains hot topic in Kyiv, which was released after a conversation between US President Donald Trump and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky. Being downplayed especially by some politicians, the call involves in Trump's request to Zelensky to launch an investigation into his political opponent Joe Biden.*
- *In the phone conversation, complaint of Ukrainian President about European Union, German and France becomes more of an issue. Zelenky stresses that they are not working enough to help Ukraine and not enforcing sanctions against Ukraine.*
- *This call brings a possible quid pro quo policy to mind. But according to the statement ("Our president is not getting involved in the US presidential race") from Zelensky's Servant of People Party, this conversation seems to be used generally by US Democrats to increase the pressure on Trump.*

#### 7. Ukraine envoy resigns amid scandal consuming Trump's presidency

26.09.2019 Two years later, Volker has resigned the envoy role after becoming ensnared in the Ukraine-related scandal that is consuming Trump's presidency and fueling an impeachment drive by House Democrats. ([POLITICO](#))

#### 8. Ukrainian Investigators Have Not Questioned Biden or His Son - Anti-Corruption Prosecutors

26.09.2019 The statement comes amid a growing scandal around US President Donald Trump after a US government whistleblower claimed the president had pressured Zelensky during a July phone call to look into a case that could potentially tarnish the political image of his main Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, in the 2020 presidential race. ([SPUTNIK](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 9. Ukraine's Place in the Geopolitical Puzzle is Shifting. That was the Point

23.09.2019 Euphoria surrounding the recent prisoner swap between Ukraine and Russia is all but unjustified. Ukraine managed to bring home the most well-known among its citizens detained in Russia and Crimea, which is undoubtedly a good thing. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

#### 10. Who Is Who in the Ukrainian Parliament?

24.09.2019 Since the parliamentary elections in Ukraine in July 2019, which led to a large-scale turnover of parliamentarians, many commentators have focused on the lack of political experience characterizing the new Verkhovna Rada. ([CARNegie EUROPE](#))

#### 11. Impeachment: Is the dam finally breaking?

24.09.2019 A whistleblower revealed that in a conversation with Ukrainian President Zelensky the president allegedly held up \$391 million in aid appropriated for Ukraine's military defense against Russia. ([BROOKINGS](#))

#### 12. Not Contributing Enough? A Summary of European Military and Development Assistance to Ukraine Since 2014

25.09.2019 President Trump has stated that one of the reasons to withhold \$250 million of U.S. military assistance to Ukraine was due to the lack of European and other nations' contributions to Ukraine. How much has Europe been providing to Ukraine since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and military incursions into the Donbas (Eastern Ukraine) in 2014? It is estimated that two-thirds of aid to Ukraine comes from European countries. ([CENTER FOR STRATEGIC INTERNATIONAL STUDIES](#))





## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Ukraine-US Rapid Trident military exercises start in Lviv region

16.09.2019 Ukraine-US Rapid Trident 2019 military command and staff exercises started at the International Peacekeeping and Security Center of the Petro Sahaidachny National Ground Forces Academy in Lviv region. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

### 2. Attitudes of Ukrainians towards Reforms: Where Is “Zrada”?

17.09.2019 On the eve of Ukraine’s presidential elections, the level of public trust in government institutions was extremely low. The rate of trust-distrust in the President was -46%, in the Verkhovna Rada – -69%, in the Government – -55%. Such a low level of trust set up a question of the legitimacy of the decisions and reforms implemented by these institutions. [\(UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS\)](#)

### 3. Schools in Russia’s Sevastopol begin teaching Ukrainian language

17.09.2019 Ukrainian language has been added to the list of subjects taught at schools in Crimea’s largest city, Sevastopol. The classes were introduced in response to requests from parents.

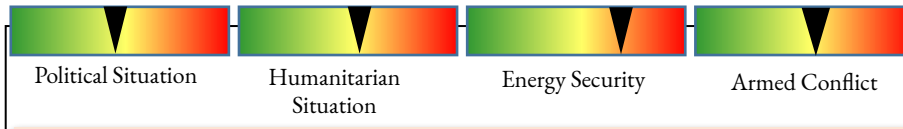
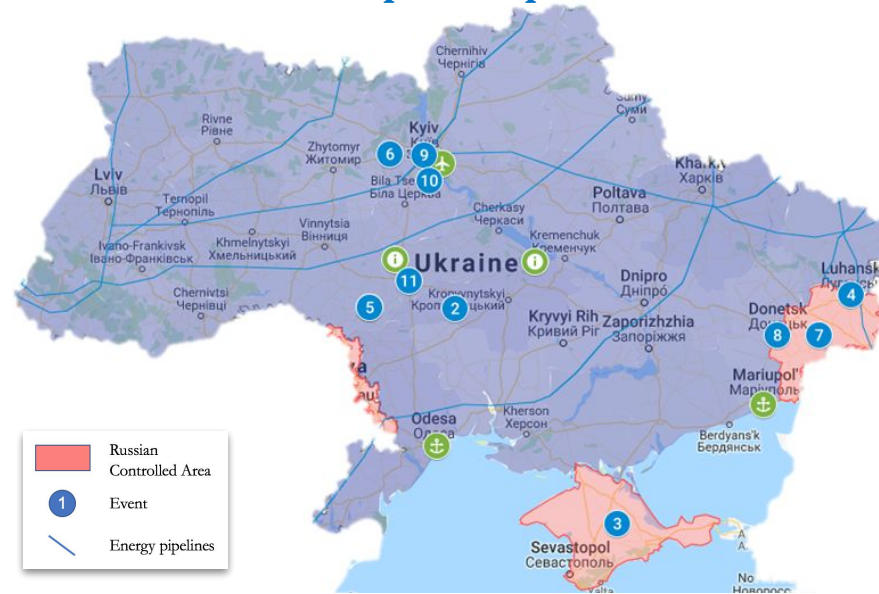
Crimea, which reunited with Russia in 2014, has a majority Russian population, but the local authorities are working to make life more comfortable for Ukrainians and other national minorities. [\(RT\)](#)

### 4. Foreign minister Prystaiko: Deployment of peacekeepers in Donbas to be considered if Minsk agreements fail

17.09.2019 Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko has stated that the deployment of a peacekeeping mission in Donbas could be one of the next steps if the situation is not settled through the Minsk agreements. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

### 5. Russia’s Gazprom: would accept short-term gas transit deal with Ukraine

18.09.2019 Russia’s Gazprom is willing to accept a short-term extension of its gas transit contract with Ukraine, Chief Executive Alexey Miller said on Thursday after talks with Ukraine and the European Union. [\(REUTERS\)](#)



## ASSESSMENT

- That the Donbas will receive self-government status after local elections are held in the currently-occupied territories, is the main yield of “Steinmeier Formula” which is a peace plan proposed by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Decided during a Normandy format meeting involving representatives from four countries on 2 September, it stresses that “The law on the unique status [of the occupied territories] will take effect the moment elections are held”. What Ukraine insists on is that elections cannot be held unless Ukraine is ensured both a secure environment and full control of the Ukrainian-Russian border. With the conditions put forward by Formula (The withdrawal of foreign troops from the occupied territories of Donbas, access to media and observers and elections should take place under the norms of Ukrainian legislation), Ukraine will likely demand assurance regarding the implementation of plan not allowing Russia playing on words. “Withdrawal of Russian troops and Russian-backed fighters” seems to be devil of a job.

### 6. Steinmeier Formula to be agreed in writing at Minsk talks before Normandy Four summit – Prystaiko

19.09.2019 One of the conditions for the meeting of the Normandy Four (Ukraine, Germany, France, Russia) to be held is the formal approval of the “Steinmeier formula” at a Minsk meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group for Donbas Settlement, says Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Vadym Prystaiko [\(UNIAN\)](#)

### 7. Ukraine Preparing More Troop Withdrawals

19.09.2019 Hints of another exchange of prisoners, talk of a bilateral withdrawal of combat soldiers and heavy weaponry from the 450-kilometer frontline in Ukraine’s east, and rising signs that Moscow and Kyiv are close to a deal on a new Russian gas-transit contract — what’s happening? [\(VOA\)](#)

### 8. Ukraine summit in Paris delayed amid continued bickering

20.09.2019 A new Normandy-format meeting to end the war in eastern Ukraine has proven difficult to put together. Breakthroughs leading to peace have been elusive as negotiations have devolved into a political tug-of-war. [\(DW\)](#)

## OPINIONS

### 9. Biden decries reports about Trump, Ukraine’s president

20.09.2019 Former Vice President Joe Biden on Friday decried reports that President Donald Trump urged the president of Ukraine to look into his son’s business dealings there.

Biden said in a statement that if the reports are true, “Then there is truly no bottom to President Trump’s willingness to abuse his power and abuse our country.”

The 2020 Democratic presidential candidate said Trump should release the transcript of his July phone conversation with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy “so that the American people can judge for themselves.”

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Russia complicit in human rights abuses in Crimea, court told**

10.09.2019 The case in Strasbourg is one of a series brought by the Ukrainian government designed to expose alleged Russian state complicity in human rights abuses. It has the potential to embarrass Vladimir Putin and lead to Ukrainian demands for reparations from Russia. [\(THE GUARDIAN\)](#)

**2. IMF mission starts negotiations in Kyiv**

11.09.2019 Ukrainian Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk earlier said that the goal of the negotiations is to get a staff agreement to open a new cooperation program for Ukraine by the end of the year. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**3. White House surrenders on Ukraine foreign aid**

11.09.2019 Trump administration officials lifted a hold on \$250 million in military assistance to Ukraine on Wednesday, ending weeks of uncertainty about the future of the aid. [\(CNN\)](#)

**4. EU extends sanctions over actions against Ukraine's territorial integrity until 15 March 2020**

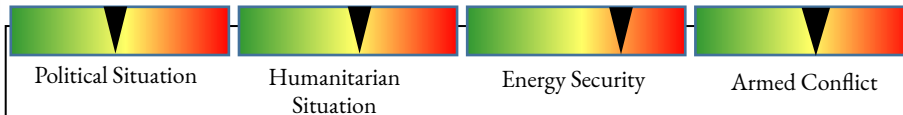
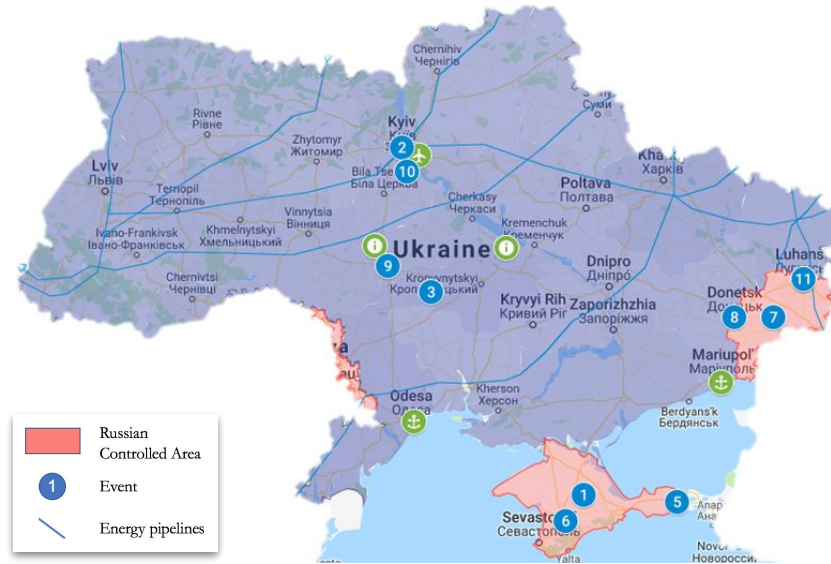
11.09.2019 The Council has extended the restrictive measures over actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine for a further six months, until 15 March 2020. The measures consist of an asset freeze and travel restrictions. They currently apply to 170 persons and 44 entities. [\(EUROPEAN COUNCIL\)](#)

**5. Moscow: Russia and Ukraine need lot of work and time to start new stage of detainee release**

12.09.2019 Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov addressed the Russian-Ukrainian detainee release, stressing that to begin a new stage both sides require hard work and a lot of time. His statement comes after Volodymyr Zelensky claimed that the next stage would be discussed at a meeting of the contact group in Minsk and at a summit of the Normandy Four. [\(SPUTNIK\)](#)

**6. Volodymyr Zelenskyy: Ukraine is working over the formula to return Crimea**

12.09.2019 Ukraine is working over the formula to return Crimea. It was stated by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during the panel discussion at the 16th annual YES meeting in Kyiv. Zelenskyy stressed that it was too early to talk about any details and he would not like to reveal them. "I can't tell you this - it will be too early. It will be like a release (of the detainees - ed.), so I do not want anyone to use our ideas," he said. [\(UKRAINIAN PRESIDENCY\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Russian-Ukrainian detainee release was the moment everyone has been waiting for. Last week Russia and Ukraine each released 35 convicted and detained persons, including 24 Ukrainian sailors who were accused of violating the Russian maritime border. Requiring hard work and a lot of time, it seems that a new stage for release would be on the agenda of both sides in parallel with meeting of the contact group in Minsk and the summit of the Normandy Four.*
- *The CEC of Ukraine always remained on the agenda as being politically biased rather than a bureaucratic institution. Accusing again its members of bias and violating procedures during the last elections, president Zelensky dismissed the Central Election Commission (CEC) with the parliament's vote in favor. Since the violations were not found as systematic or gross in its work by international and national observers, the decision has been criticised by some circuits, emphasizing also its future impacts on the body. The decision is also accepted as furtherance on democratization of the legal entities. On the other hand, Zelensky might be preparing for the future peace talks with Russia on Donbas conflict, and a potential referendum in which the CEC will have a significant role if realized.*

**OPINIONS**

**7. Russian disinformation, Psy-Ops Operations target new Ukrainian Government**

08.09.2019 Despite various hints and declarations of progress in Moscow's dialogue with the new Ukrainian government, Russia has nonetheless maintained its aggressive behavior. The shelling of Donbas persists, and the Ukrainian General Staff reports almost daily on new casualties—wounded or killed. Simultaneously, the Kremlin's information operations against Ukraine have not ceased. [\(THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION\)](#)

**8. Putin's star is fading**

10.09.2019 For opposition politicians, the greatest challenge isn't the government's systematic efforts to ban them from standing in elections or crackdowns on pro-democracy protesters. It's something Russians call beznadyoga — a collective feeling of hopelessness that paralyzes any sustained effort to overturn the status quo and marginalizes those who try. [\(POLITICO\)](#)

**9. Judy Asks: Is the Détente Between Ukraine and Russia Real?**

11.09.2019 The exchange of prisoners, including prominent figures such as Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov, is indeed a promising first step for a new diplomatic process between Ukraine and Russia: three months after the election of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, it demonstrates a willingness from both sides to work together and to compromise under mutually agreed conditions. [\(CARNEGIE EUROPE\)](#)

**10. Zelenskyy sacks well-functioning Central Election Commission, raising worries about capitulation to Russia on Donbas**

13.09.2019 Ukraine's parliament voted in favor of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's decision to dismiss all the Central Election Commission (CEC) squad. The president accused the CEC members of bias and violating procedures during the last elections. The CEC refutes the allegations. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**11. Opinion: Volodymyr Zelenskiy's grace period must end**

16.09.2019 Thus far, the West has been reluctant to criticize the Ukrainian comedian-turned-president. But, with some reforms he has instigated appearing anti-democratic, a clear response is now needed [\(DW\)](#)



**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Trump gets bipartisan pressure to release Ukraine funds meant to combat Russia**

02.09.2019 In a letter sent to White House acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney on Tuesday, the Senate’s Ukraine Caucus — a group of three Democrats and two Republicans — called the funds “vital to the long term viability of the Ukrainian military.” [\(POLITICO\)](#)

**2. Ukraine’s parliament scraps immunity for lawmakers**

02.09.2019 Ukraine’s parliament has approved a much-anticipated bill to scrap immunity from prosecution for lawmakers. The move was one of the main campaign promises for comedian Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who won the presidential election by a landslide in April. [\(AP\)](#)

**3. Ukrainian Foreign Ministry comments on ‘special status’ of state in EU**

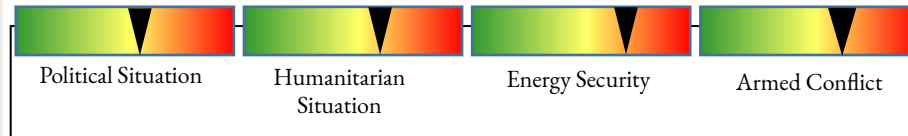
03.09.2019 The Foreign Ministry of Ukraine has stated that the civilizational choice of the Ukrainian people and the strategic goal of Ukraine is full membership in the EU. Ukrainian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Kateryna Zelenko said this in comments to Ukrinform, commenting on the proposal by Slovenian President Borut Pahor to grant a “special status” to Ukraine and Turkey instead of a full EU membership. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**4. UN report: Russia must stop human rights violations in Crimea**

04.09.2019 The United Nations has published the first report of Secretary-General António Guterres on the situation of human rights in the occupied Crimea. The report will be represented at the 74th UN session on September 23. It is based on the information collected by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in line with General Assembly resolutions. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**5. High Anti-Corruption Court starts work in Ukraine: how will it operate?**

05.09.2019 On September 5 Ukraine’s High Anti-Corruption Court started its work. The newly established institution completes the state anti-corruption system. The National Anti-Corruption Bureau (NABU) has investigative powers, the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor’s Office (SAPO) brings charges and the High Anti-Corruption Court considers the cases and adopts decisions. [\(UKRAINE CRISIS\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- “A good step forward towards the normalization” and “the first step towards improving relations and finishing this horrible war” were the definitions from Putin and Zelensky respectively after exchange of freed prisoners. Having a broad repercussion in press, prisoner swap seems to be selling hope in normalization process and hopefully helping end the conflict in Eastern Ukraine.
- Ukraine’s Zelensky is proceeding to take remarkable steps in every sphere of Ukrainians’ life. Though the predecessor of Zelensky had “ending parliamentary immunity” in his political rhetoric, he could not come through on his promise. President Zelensky has taken a firm action and on Tuesday Ukraine’s parliament has approved to scrap immunity from prosecution for lawmakers, which will be valid from January 2020 on. It seems that this change will be appreciated by Ukrainians with the perception of “Ukraine is improving”. Because the parliament has quite a while been notorious for hosting businessmen using their seats to ward off possible criminal prosecution for corruption or financial crimes.

**6. Zelensky intends to carry on with reforming Ukrainian defense sector to NATO standards**

05.09.2019 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has vowed to continue actively reforming the Ukrainian security and defense sector to bring it in compliance with NATO standards. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**7. Film director Oleg Sentsov and MH17 suspect among those freed in Russia-Ukraine prisoner swap**

06.09.2019 A man suspected of involvement in the downing of Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 that killed 298 people has been released along with 69 other prisoners from Russia and Ukraine in a long-awaited exchange, according to Ukrainian and Russia state news agencies. [\(CNN\)](#)

**8. Putin and Zelensky discuss future contact, settling conflict in Ukraine – Kremlin**

06.09.2019 Russia’s Vladimir Putin and Ukraine’s Volodymyr Zelensky had phone talks after the landmark prisoner swap between the two countries, discussing the civil conflict in eastern Ukraine and measures to settle it, the Kremlin said. [\(RT\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**9. Danger Ahead**

03.09.2019 Although every Ukrainian understandably wishes a quick end to the war in the Donbas and a lasting settlement of the conflict, Ukraine is strongly advised to approach any Minsk Summit with the greatest care. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**10. Judicial reform 2.0: Zelensky comes with initiatives only partly supported by society**

03.09.2019 In the last five years, the judiciary remained the cornerstone for other Ukrainian reforms – sooner or later, any change could have ended up being appealed in court. The activists involved in the judicial reform to the greatest extent had blamed ex-president Petro Poroshenko of failing to strip courts from political influence. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**11. Q&A: What Does the Prisoner Swap Mean for Ukrainian-Russian Relations?**

06.09.2019 Who got the better deal? What might this signal about Russia’s willingness to finally negotiate and end the war? What does this mean for Zelensky? In what ways does the Kremlin benefit? What impact will this have on upcoming Normandy Format dialogue? How will the rest of the international community view this? Concession or negotiation? [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Survey: Majority of Donbas residents want to be part of Ukraine**

27.08.2019 More than five years after the beginning of the war in eastern Ukraine, most residents of the country's Donbas region still see themselves as part of Ukraine, according to a recent survey carried out by the Berlin-based Center for East European and International Studies (ZOiS). According to the research, 64.7 percent of respondents from the government-controlled parts of Donbas want the region to be fully reintegrated into Ukraine with no special status. ([EMERGING EUROPE](#))

**2. Ukraine frees jailed Russian journalist amid prisoner swap talks**

27.08.2019 A court in Ukraine ordered jailed Russian journalist Kirill Vyshinsky to be freed on bail and released from custody, as Moscow and Kiev hold behind-the-scenes talks on a possible prisoner swap. ([REUTERS](#))

**3. Trump is one big headache for Ukraine**

28.08.2019 Just days after lobbying for Russia's reinstatement in the G7, U.S. President Donald Trump has reportedly ordered delays in Ukraine receiving \$250 million in military aid approved by Congress. ([KYIV POST](#))

**4. Ukraine parliament appoints 35-year-old lawyer as new Prime Minister**

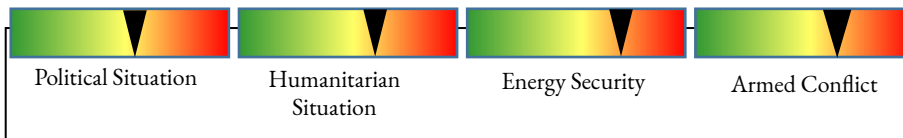
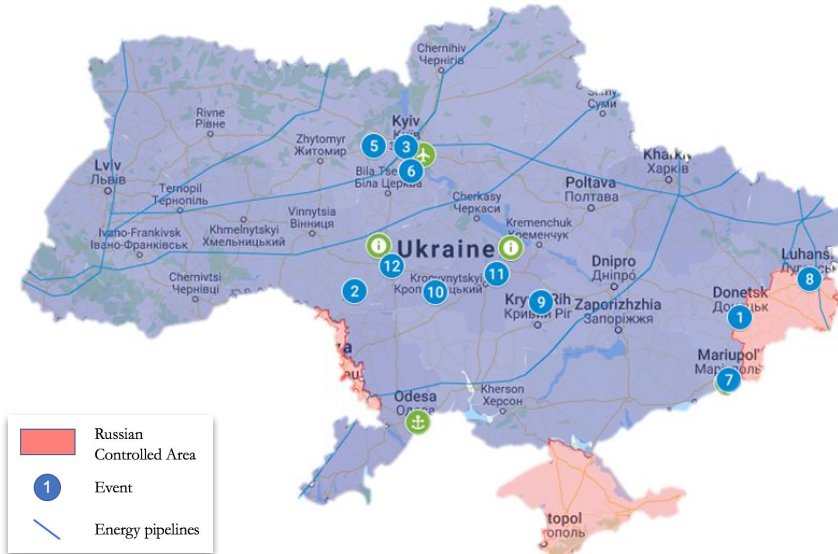
28.08.2019 Ukraine's new parliament meets for the first time, appointing Oleksiy Honcharuk as PM. The former activist and lawyer, who has only three months' government experience, pledged to end corruption and boost the economy. ([DW](#))

**5. Andriy Zahorodnyuk becomes Defense Minister of Ukraine**

28.08.2019 Ukrainian lawmakers approved the candidacy of Andriy Zahorodnyuk as the new Defense Minister of Ukraine. Former advisor of President Volodymyr Zelensky, Zahorodnyuk is a civilian figure that supported the Ukrainian military since the beginning of Donbas conflict; he is also the ex-member of Supervisory Board of Ukroboronprom, the country's leading defense company. ([112UA](#))

**6. Creating a Washington - Warsaw - Kyiv axis**

29.08.2019 The first meeting between Ukrainian and U.S. leaders, Volodymyr Zelensky and Donald Trump, could be held in Warsaw early September. However, it might not be limited to a handshake and a photoshoot. After all, according to Olena Zerkal, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for European Integration, the presidents are set to sign several documents. ([UNIAN](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- Leaving 100 days behind after the inauguration of his presidency, President Zelensky seems to win favour in Ukrainians' eyes.

According to a study, the experts assessed Zelensky's actions during his first 100 days as 3.7 points out of 10 in general. However, 6.3 points had been received by ex-president Petro Poroshenko for his first 100 days in 2014. The fact that the political, social and economic situation in 2014 was totally different from now could be put into words. Up to results in this study, president's foreign policy efforts and his sticking to the pro-western direction have great importance. His initiative on the Donbas peace process (revitalization of the Minsk process) seems to be assessed invaluable.

However achilles' heel of Zelensky seems to be the appointments to public positions made not based on meritocracy, but according to personal connections and loyalty.

**7. Chinese envoy tells U.S. not to meddle in Ukraine's affairs**

29.08.2019 China's ambassador to Ukraine, Du Wei, told the United States on Friday not to interfere in Kiev's affairs. ([REUTERS](#))

**8. Ukraine cools reports of imminent Russia prisoner swap**

29.08.2019 Ukrainian efforts to swap high-profile prisoners with Russia are "ongoing" but will not happen on Friday, officials in Kiev say, rejecting reports that the swaps had taken place. ([BBC](#))

**9. Ukraine, Poland want continued sanctions on Russia**

30.08.2019 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said he and Poland's president have agreed that sanctions ought to continue against Russia until Ukraine regains the territory it lost in Moscow's 2014 annexation of Crimea. He said he and Polish President had discussed the next steps needed to end the war in eastern Ukraine and to return the Crimean Peninsula to Ukraine. ([AP](#))

**OPINIONS**

**10. Guarding the guardians: Ukraine's security and judicial reforms under Zelensky**

28.08.2019 Ukrainians longed for a government that was less corrupt, more responsive to citizens' demands, and bound by the rule of law. They ousted a government that had denied them their rights, fought the foreign invasion that would have reinstated a repressive kleptocracy, and elected new political leaders. ([EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS](#))

**11. Ukraine's new Parliament violates regulations in its strong will to serve the people**

29.08.2019 On 29 August, the new parliament started its work. At first, a new Cabinet was appointed, then the cancellation of the deputies' immunity was voted for in the first reading. Finally more than 100 laws were voted through to be directed to the relevant committees of Rada in an accelerated procedure, to be considered during the next few days. Fast work is a good thing. However, the style of that work, as well as violations of several procedural regulations provoke worries. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**12. Heading for (another) Ukraine-Russia gas fight?**

29.08.2019 Twice in the past 14 years, a dispute between Ukraine and Russia has led Russia to cut off natural gas flows to Ukraine and Europe. The stage is being set for another cut-off in January. The European Union wants to ensure that gas continues to flow, so EU officials will attempt at a mid-September meeting to broker an agreement. ([BROOKINGS](#))



**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine, Israel sign bilateral documents**

18.08.2019 Ukraine and Israel signed bilateral documents on cooperation in agriculture, economics, education, culture, as well as youth and sports. ([INTERFAX](#))

**2. Merkel links Russia's return to G8 Format to implementation of Minsk Accords**

20.08.2019 "As for Russia's participation in the G7 meetings, in 2014 Russia was expelled for certain reasons, and the Russian president recently visited France. There may be slight advances in the implementation of the Minsk process but if we really move forward, it would create a new situation," Merkel told reporters. ([SPUTNIK](#))

**3. OSCE: This year's 'harvest ceasefire' is most effective. No civilian casualties recorded**

21.08.2019 "The ceasefire that had been agreed by the TCG and entered into force on July 21, 2019 continues to yield results. Compared to other recommitments to ceasefire, this one has been the most effective. Today, 30 days after its start, the average figure of ceasefire violations continues to be significantly lower compared to this indicator before the ceasefire took effect," Sajdik said. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**4. Ukrainians divided over need for Ukraine to join NATO – poll**

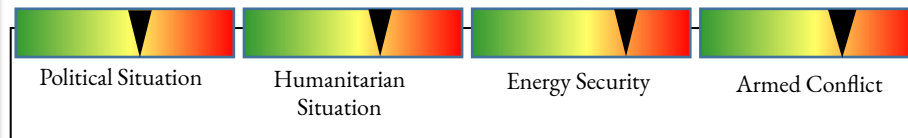
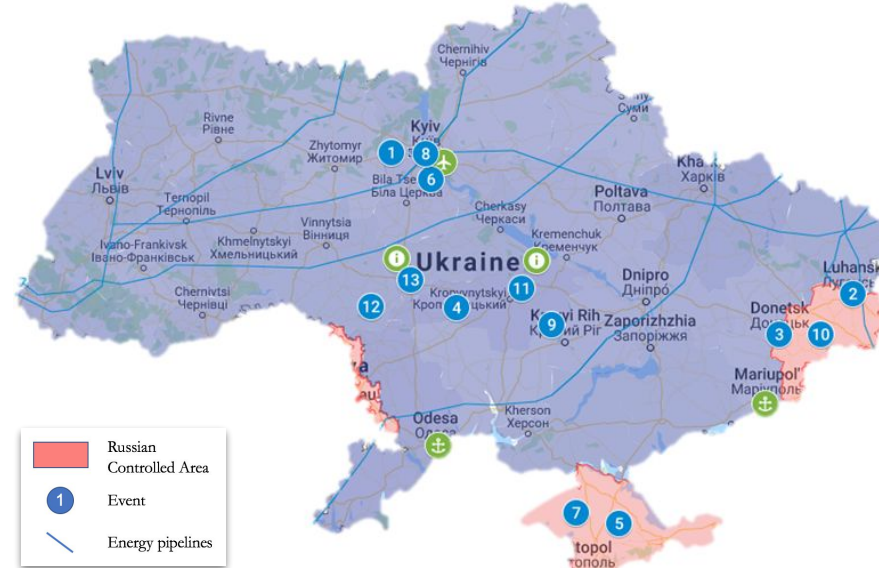
21.08.2019 As many as 40.9% of Ukrainians believe that accession to NATO would be the best security guarantee for their country, while 35.9% see Ukraine's security in its non-aligned status, according to the results of a public opinion survey conducted by the DIF together with the KIIS. ([INTERFAX](#))

**5. Zelensky, Tusk discuss issue of Russia's non-return to G7**

22.08.2019 Zelensky urged the EU to take a decisive stance regarding the impossibility of Russia's return to the G7 until the reasons that caused Russia's expulsion from the G7 – the occupation of Crimea and aggression in Donbas – are eliminated. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**6. Putin tells Macron he sees no alternative to Ukraine talks**

22.08.2019 Putin told Macron that phone conversations with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy had given him cautious grounds for optimism, but stressed that he believed that any meeting aimed at resolving the Ukraine crisis should yield tangible results. ([REUTERS](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- It seems that West is again divided on the matter of the return of Russia to G7 meetings from which it was expelled in 2014 because of its aggression to Ukraine. It can be said that the situation regarding its expulsion has not changed much since 2014. While the U.S. and France reportedly supports Russia's return to the G7 group, the President of the European Council rejects the idea and German chancellor links it to the implementation of Minsk Accords. A positive decision may decrease the impacts of the economic sanctions against Russia and have negative consequences on the peacebuilding efforts in Ukraine.
- Although Ukraine is on progress in the direction of EU and NATO, when compared to the previous poll in December 2018, a decrease in the opinion of that NATO would be the best security guarantee for Ukraine, attracts the attention (recently 40.9%, in December 46.1%). It is highly possible that not taking a firm and effective stand of NATO on Russia's everchanging hybrid practices, plays a great role in the explanation of this decrease.

**7. Speech by President of Ukraine on occasion of Independence Day**

23.08.2019 The speech by President of Ukraine Zelensky on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**8. Tusk rejects the idea of Russia rejoining G7, suggests having Ukraine as next summit's guest instead**

23.08.2019 Ahead of the meeting of the world's leading G7 countries, Donald Trump floated the idea of incorporating Russia back into the group. But EC president Donald Tusk had a different thought – Ukraine as a guest. ([RT](#))

**OPINIONS**

**9. The West needs to act fast to help Ukraine**

18.08.2019 The country has a unique chance for change that rests mainly with the president, parliament, and soon-to-be appointed government, but the West has a significant role to play. Ukraine will have a window of opportunity for profound reform, but such windows are rarely open for long. The West needs to stand up and deliver while it is open. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**10. Russia, G7 and IOs: Where is the Red Line?**

21.08.2019 Talk about Russia's return to G7 continues a dangerous trend started by Russia's return to PACE. So, we ask: where is the red line? When, in 2017 and 2018, Russia repeatedly attempted to return to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) without fulfilling its conditions, Ukrainian experts said this would be a mistake. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

**11. Violence and anti-violence. Ukraine between Russia and Europe**

22.08.2019 Western Europe's culture of anti-violence continues to exert a magnetic pull on Ukrainian society. But will that be enough to resist Russia's twenty-first century politics of dog-eat-dog? ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

**12. G7 Leaders: The Kremlin is setting a trap. Don't fall for it**

22.08.2019 The Kremlin recognizes neither the rules nor the format of the game. For the war, the Kremlin has saved many different "chessboards" and ensured numerous ways to avoid responsibility. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**13. Independence Day of Ukraine: facts & brief history**

23.08.2019 August 24 is Ukraine's national holiday, Independence Day. This day marks the anniversary of the signing of the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine by the Verkhovna Rada of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic on August 24, 1991. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine protests Putin’s trip to motorcycle show in Crimea**

10.08.2019 Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry has protested Russian President Vladimir Putin’s visit to Crimea, where he attended a pro-Kremlin motorcycle club’s annual festival. ([AP](#))

**2. Lie-detector may be used during next questioning of Poroshenko – SBI director**

11.08.2019 State Bureau of Investigations (SBI) Director Roman Truba has said the next questioning of ex-President Petro Poroshenko may be conducted with the assistance of lie-detecting equipment. ([INTERFAX](#))

**3. Ukraine’s president offers citizenship to Russian political refugees**

12.08.2019 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed a decree on Tuesday offering citizenship to Russians suffering political persecution, and also to foreigners who fought on Kiev’s side in the conflict in eastern Ukraine. ([REUTERS](#))

**4. Ukraine’s water blockade did not hamper Crimea’s development – regional head**

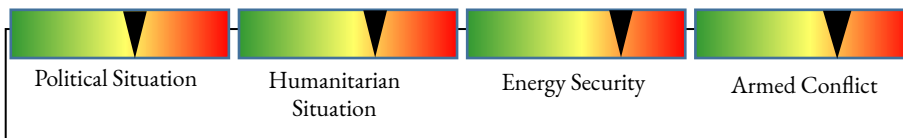
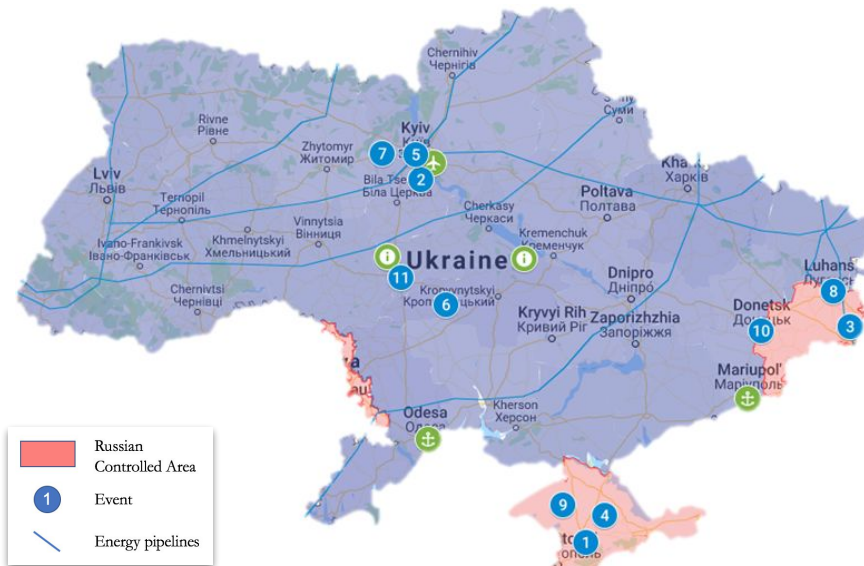
13.08.2019 The water blockade was imposed on Crimea by Ukraine five years ago but failed to achieve its goals, the peninsula has adapted to the lack of water supply through the North Crimean Canal and is now developing successfully, head of Crimea, Sergei Aksyonov wrote on his Facebook page ([TASS](#))

**5. Merkel: cooperation with Russia will be limited until Minsk agreements implemented**

13.08.2019 The Minsk agreements need to be implemented ... until they are not implemented, the opportunities for cooperation for us will be completely different from what we would like, Merkel told reporters ([INTERFAX](#))

**6. Taylor: Zelensky’s proposal to expand Normandy Four interesting for U.S.**

14.08.2019 The United States believes it interesting a proposal of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky to expand Normandy Four thanks to the United States or the United Kingdom and it is mulling this possibility, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires a.i. in Ukraine Ambassador William Taylor has said ([INTERFAX](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

▪ *As a response to Russia’s practice expanding the number of Ukrainians who can apply for fast-track Russian passports, President Zelensky signed a decree offering citizenship to Russians suffering political persecution, and also to foreigners who fought on Kiev’s side in the conflict in eastern Ukraine.*

*The government and parliament are to legislate for the proposal to take effect. Keeping in mind that the president’s Servant of the People party is the largest in the new parliament following its landslide victory in a snap election in July, it appears that Zelensky is to use this decree not only to try to suppress Putin and make him lose favor of Russia’s people but also to gain trust of his own people in struggle with Russia.*

▪ *Thinking that “peace efforts in Ukraine” go round in circle, President Zelensky goes most probably into effort of proposing to expand Normandy Four. With possible addition of United States or the United Kingdom, Ukraine conflict will probably gain a different viewpoint. But a possible deadlock is also among the options.*

**7. How can Kyiv become the center of Europe? Find answers at the Kyiv Investment Forum 2019**

15.08.2019 The focus of this year’s Kyiv Investment Forum that will take place on 17 September at the Mystetskyi Arsenal, lies on the strategy of creation and development of the Kyiv agglomeration. The forum will bring together Ukrainian and international investors, representatives of foreign municipalities, local governments, the Kyiv business elite, IT and art communities. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**8. Putin, Macron meeting can diffuse tensions in Donbass - expert**

16.08.2019 The meetings between Russian President Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron scheduled for August 19 can lower tensions in southeastern Ukraine, Russia’s Valdai Discussion Club expert and Head of the Center for French Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences Institute for European Studies Yuri Rubinsky said ([TASS](#))

**9. Package of legislative initiatives to protect Ukrainians in Crimea formed**

16.08.2019 “We are working on it, we have a very good package of initiatives from NGOs ... We believe that it contains many important things, including simplification of the receipt of documents, the so-called issue of non-resident Crimeans and many others,” the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in Crimea Anton Korynevych said ([UKRINFORM](#))

**10. New evidence emerges of Russian role in Ukraine conflict**

16.08.2019 Newly collated evidence documenting Russian military involvement in the conflict in Ukraine will be used to bolster legal claims against the Russian state by Ukrainian volunteer fighters. ([THE GUARDIAN](#))

**OPINIONS**

**11. Breathing Life Into Eastern Ukraine**

11.08.2019 Russia occupies seven percent of Ukraine, including Crimea and a chunk of the region known as the Donbas on Ukraine’s eastern frontier. The fighting continues sporadically, and the Minsk agreements that were supposed to bring peace have failed. ([FOREIGN AFFAIRS](#))

**12. Mr. Zelenskyy Goes to Washington**

13.08.2019 Two months after his landslide victory, President Zelenskyy is not only reshaping Ukraine’s domestic picture, but he is attempting to establish a new narrative in Ukraine’s foreign policy. His mindset, style, and the composition of his team varies greatly from his predecessors. They represent generational change. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))



## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Volodymyr Zelensky's Ukraine: first a revolution, now a purge?

04.08.2019 As Ukraine operates with a one-party government for the first time in its post-Soviet history, opponents accuse the new administration of taking out revenge ([112 UA](#))

### 2. Ukraine calls for more peace talks after four die in eastern Donbass

05.08.2019 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy urged the leaders of Russia, Germany and France to resume talks on a peaceful solution to the separatist conflict in Ukraine's eastern Donbass region after four soldiers were killed in shelling on Tuesday. ([REUTERS](#))

### 3. Together, we will surely find a way to make Russia respect international law - President

06.08.2019 President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy is convinced that a mechanism will be found to make Russia responsible for its actions. The Head of State called Turkey one of the partners who can help achieve this goal. ([UKRAINIAN PRESIDENCY](#))

### 4. Opposition Platform ready to team up with any party to achieve peace in Donbass — leader

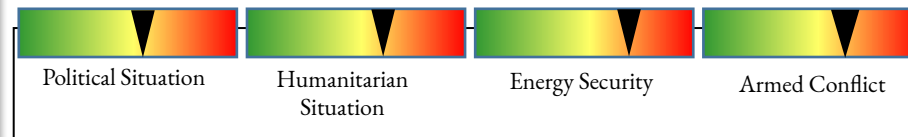
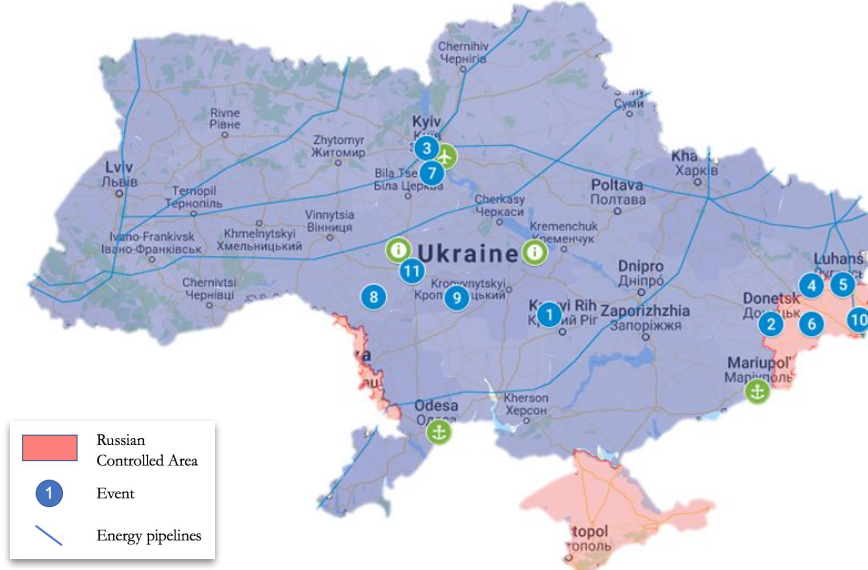
06.08.2019 Leader of Opposition Platform For Life party Viktor Medvedchuk said that "we will be allies with any political force that will set the task of establishing peace and ending warfare" in east Ukraine ([TASS](#))

### 5. EU hopes Russia to influence Russia-occupation fighters in Donbas to reach ceasefire

07.08.2019 The European Union has reiterated that they expect Russia to use its influence on Russia-occupation fighters in Donbas with the aim of an immediate cessation of hostilities, and also noted the importance of intensifying negotiation efforts for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. ([INTERFAX](#))

### 6. Why ceasefire deals aren't working and should Zelensky talk with Putin

07.08.2019 Yet another ceasefire agreement, the so-called "harvest truce" announced in Donbas on July 21, was thwarted by enemy shelling, which killed four Ukrainian troops on August 6. That is, the first ceasefire negotiated in Minsk after Volodymyr Zelensky was elected President of Ukraine, had the same result as all the previous ones, struck during Poroshenko's presidency. ([UNIAN](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- *Taking both strengthening positions of Russian-backed militants, demining operations at the bridge near Stanytsia Lubanska and the dismantling of fortified installations in this area into account, it is clear that Ukraine's situation in the war-torn Eastern Ukraine is being gradually weakened in this extremely important strategic sector of the war zone. Practice of "total ban on return fire by the Armed Forces of Ukraine" is at issue, but if it is so in the combat zone, the negative effect of this will probably be a considerable extent on the military personnel.*
- *Above all, the rumours underlying that by the end of the year all military units will be moved further away from the administrative borders of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts may pave the way for disappointing Ukrainians (especially military) in the midst of negotiation efforts.*

## OPINIONS

### 7. Comic or Commander in Chief? Reform of Ukrainian Defense Industry Giant Tests Zelenskiy's Will

04.08.2019 The 41-year old president now has the power to do just that after July 21 parliamentary elections handed his party a powerful majority – and a clear mandate to install reform-minded officials in key positions in government and state companies. ([RFE/RL](#))

### 8. Reforms, Priorities and Foreign Investments: Interview with Hugues Mingarelli, Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine

04.08.2019 UkraineWorld recently sat down with His Excellency Hugues Mingarelli, Head of the EU Delegation to Ukraine, who is finishing his tenure in a month's time. A diplomat who has proven to be an affectionate friend of Ukraine, he shared his insights on some of Ukraine's major achievements in recent years, as well as challenges that loom ahead. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

### 9. EU disinformation watchdog debunks over 6,000 cases of pro-Kremlin disinformation

05.08.2019 The EUvsDisinfo database has surpassed 6,000 cases of pro-Kremlin disinformation since its founding in November 2015. Of these, 1,000 have been collected only in the span of the last four months. While this is partly due to the increased resources the EU is dedicating to monitoring and countering disinformation, it also shows that the Kremlin's efforts to destabilize Europe and the West are most definitely not slowing down. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

### 10. Is the new Ukrainian government getting ready to surrender the Donbas?

06.08.2019 Recent events in the Armed Forces of Ukraine are causing widespread concern. First of all, the situation on the contact line shows that Russian-backed militants are slowly strengthening their positions against the background of a total ban on return fire by the Armed Forces of Ukraine. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

### 11. Time Is Running Out to Kill Putin's Pet Project

07.08.2019 Russia's \$12 billion Nord Stream 2 is not a natural gas pipeline. It's a weapon, in the form of an underwater pipeline, that will give President Vladimir Putin the power to plunge the Soviet Union's former satellites and republics in Europe into darkness or recession. It must be stopped. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Ukraine disappointed with termination of INF Treaty because of Russia's non-compliance

02.07.2019 Ukraine is disappointed with the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics following the situation around it, caused by Russia's actions, and fully understands the U.S. move in response to Russia's non-compliance. In response to Russia's aggressive actions and proceeding from the fact of the INF Treaty termination, Ukraine will enhance its dialogue with NATO with the aim to discuss the options of strengthening defense of the entire Alliance's Eastern flank. ([UKRINFORM](#))

### 2. Ukraine to launch Russian-language TV channel in battle for hearts and minds

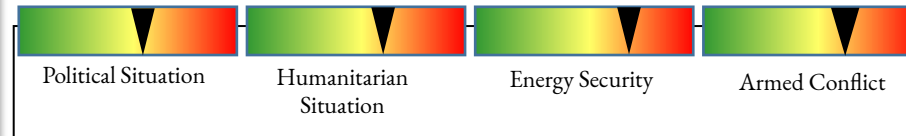
28.07.2019 Ukraine plans to launch a worldwide Russian-language TV channel, as part of an effort to win the hearts and minds of people living in the eastern Donbass region and Russia. "It must be admitted that Ukraine practically lost the information war for the minds of people in the occupied territories of Donbass and in occupied Crimea," Kyrylo Tymoshenko, Zelenskiy's deputy chief of staff, told Interfax Ukraine news agency in an interview. ([REUTERS](#))

### 3. Ukraine pundit who predicted Zelenskiy's rise now forecasts his fall

29.07.2019 A once-obscure Ukrainian regional pundit who gained national attention for predicting the unlikely rise of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy is now predicting the new leader's popularity will swiftly evaporate. Bobyrenko had earlier success predicting the careers of Ukrainian leaders. A few months into the presidency of Viktor Yanukovich in 2010, he said the Kremlin-friendly leader could meet a similar fate to that of Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, who was toppled in a revolution in 1989. Yanukovich fled to Russia after a popular revolt in February 2014. ([REUTERS](#))

### 4. Ukraine's anti-corruption campaign targets Klitschko and Poroshenko

29.07.2019 Ukraine's new president swept to power by vowing to fight corruption. On the heels of Volodymyr Zelenskiy's election success, his predecessor and the high-profile mayor of Kyiv are now in the anti-graft crosshairs. Ukraine's judiciary has started targeting corrupt lawmakers. Hardly a day has gone by without news about the investigations into former President Petro Poroshenko and his allies. On July 25, Poroshenko was even summoned to Ukraine's State Bureau of Investigation. ([DW](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- Ukraine -having inspectable Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) facilities on its territory- was considered one of the post-Soviet states to be inheritors of the INF Treaty by the United States after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in December 1991.
- After failing to find a way to preserve the treaty in the summit between U.S. and Russia on 30 January 2019, the United States suspended its compliance with the INF Treaty on 2 February 2019. In a 'mirror response' to President Donald Trump's decision, the same day Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia had also suspended the INF Treaty.
- On 2 August 2019, blaming Russia of being solely responsible for the treaty's demise, the US formally announced it had withdrawn from the treaty following the six-month period from 2 February suspension from INF.
- Citing Russian aggression as a serious threat to the European continent, and the presence of Russian Iskander-M nuclear-capable missile systems in Crimea, Ukraine seems to be an arena of the "new arms race" in the forthcoming years.

### 5. Trump could accept proposal to take part in talks on Donbas – U.S. Special Representative

02.08.2019 Kurt Volker, the Special Representative of the U.S. Department of State for Ukraine Negotiations, did not rule out that U.S. President Donald Trump will accept the proposal to participate in the negotiations aimed at settling the conflict in Donbas, if Russia shows the willingness of stopping the conflict. ([INTERFAX](#))

## OPINIONS

### 6. Russia and Cooperative Security in Europe: Times Change, Tactics Remain

31.07.2019 Russia has taken a consistent, long-term approach to those principles, emphasizing the hard security it desired while minimizing the dimension of human rights and democratic governance. It developed a playbook for its approach, one that worked in the 1990s. Russia has challenged the liberal international order, but has kept its basic playbook for European security. ([CARNEGIE EUROPE](#))

### 7. Will Zelenskyy aim for even more power via snap local elections?

01.08.2019 Eventually, it was the Constitution Court which ruled that the 21 July elections would be legal. Why such a rush with elections was needed has become clear when Zelenskyy's Servant of the People party got 254 out of the total 450 seats in the Verkhovna Rada (parliament). It's highly likely that justification will be found for having snap elections as well. However, Zelenskyy's intentions are far from being clear. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

### 8. Black Sea Security: New Challenges

03.08.2019 As of July 2019, the security situation in the Black Sea region is estimated to be unstable. There are signs of further deterioration. Some parts of the territories of the Black Sea countries remain under the occupation of the Russian Federation: Abkhazia and South Ossetia (Tskhinvali district, Georgia); Transnistria (Moldova); Crimea, the city of Sevastopol, parts of Lugansk and Donetsk regions (Ukraine). ([UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS](#))



**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine's president won big in parliamentary elections. It will strengthen his hand against Putin.**

22.07.2019. Volodymyr Zelensky seized headlines when he swept Ukraine's presidential elections in May. Now the Ukrainian president appears set to dramatically refashion the country's political landscape. ([CNN](#))

**2. Russian Duma speaks in favor of restarting inter-parliamentary dialogue with Ukraine.**

22.07.2019. Contacts between the Russian and Ukrainian parliaments must be restarted in order to mend ties between Kiev and Moscow ([TASS](#))

**3. Ukraine reports full ceasefire in Donbas on July 22 .**

23.07.2019. Russia's hybrid military forces were fully abiding by the so-called "harvest" ceasefire in Donbas on Monday, July 22. ([UNIAN](#))

**4. Ukraine's Balancing Act.**

24.07.2019. The result of Ukraine's parliamentary election shows that the population wants to rebalance the country's policy priorities and wants the new ruling elites to put citizens' interests first. ([CARNEGIE EUROPE](#))

**5. Ukraine seizes Russian tanker in Black Sea.**

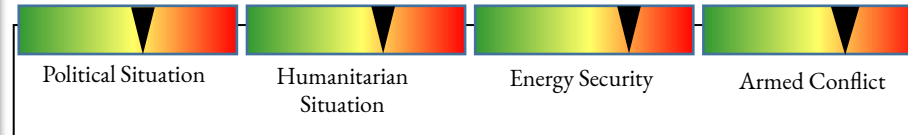
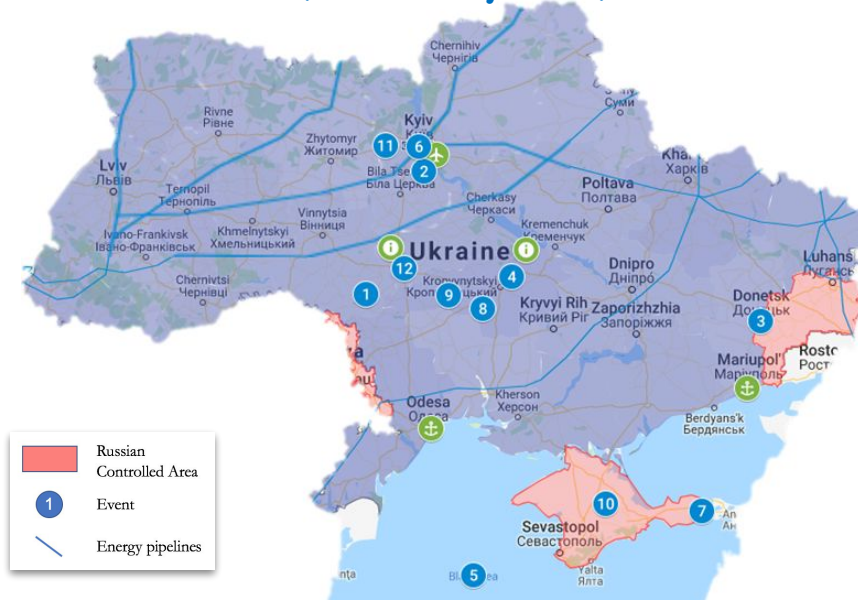
25.07.2019. The Ukrainian Security Service said Thursday it had seized a Russian tanker in a Black Sea port, a move that could undermine an anticipated prisoner swap between the two countries. ([AP](#))

**6. Death of the Parliamentary Republic in Ukraine.**

26.07.2019. The results of the 2019 parliamentary elections show that Ukraine has distanced itself even more from the parliamentary-presidential republic model than in 2010, when the Constitutional Court created an opportunity for Viktor Yanukovich to return to a presidential-parliamentary system of government. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**7. 'An act of piracy': Moscow slams seizure of its tanker, says Ukraine should think of 'ramifications'.**

26.07.2019. Officials in Moscow have said that Ukraine, which has seized a Russian tanker, has acted like a pirate, and urged Kiev to think of how the act could affect the release of its own sailors, currently imprisoned in Russia. ([RT](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- Unprecedented in the history of independent Ukraine, Zelensky has not only the presidential post but also the majority in Parliament (43,16 % of votes, 254/450 seats), which may signify *he can concentrate all power in his hands.*
- Although he has used very similar rhetoric (fight against corruption, criticism of Russian aggression, pro-Western course) of Euromaidan parties, he has not experienced disappointment in parliamentary elections as the other parties, which see themselves under the inspiration of the Revolution of Dignity, have faced. It seems that he and his party have attracted both supporters of Maidan and its opponents. Up to data analysis, it is clear that social network campaigns had a great share in Zelensky's landslide victory (e.g. he and his party had 10 times more likes, video views and comments than the closest competitors on Instagram).

**OPINIONS**

**8. Opinion: Ukraine is tired of yesterday.**

22.07.2019. Nowhere is democracy's huge and impressive potential more striking than in Ukraine. The parliamentary elections have confirmed a political shakeup, which offers a lot more than just new faces ([DW](#))

**9. Zelensky's Everywhere: Quick Conclusions from Ukraine's Snap Parliamentary Election.**

22.07.2019. Ukraine held a snap parliamentary election on July 21st. UkraineWorld held extensive live coverage of the election, where you can find all the key facts. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

**10. Russia can't solve Crimea's water problem.**

23.07.2019. Desertification, land degradation and empty promises of occupation authorities: Crimea is still dealing with water shortage. Ukraine provided up to 85% of Crimea's water needs through the North Crimean Canal, connecting the peninsula to Ukraine's largest river Dniro in the mainland. After the Russian annexation in 2014, water supplies stopped – and the desiccation of Crimea began. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**11. Much Ado About Volodymyr Zelensky.**

24.07.2019. Having successfully dissolved the Verkhovna Rada ahead of schedule, he and his team made the case that Ukraine needed a legislature fresh for the job. Ukrainian voters responded, giving his newly created and quickly assembled "Servant of the People" party the absolute majority in the new assembly. He now takes full responsibility for the course of the country. ([THE NATIONAL INTEREST](#))

**12. Ukraine's politics reloaded: key opportunities and risks.**

26.07.2019. On July 21, 2019 snap parliamentary elections were held in Ukraine. They are seen as a historic event – not just because the party of the new President won but because it secured its position well ahead of other political forces. MPs from the "Servant of People" (Sluha Narodu) party will take 253 seats in the Parliament out of the total 450. It will also allow the party to form the coalition without teaming up with other political forces. The Parliament with the single-party coalition will then form the government. ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine says it has agreed exchange of prisoners with Russia.**

16.07.2019. Senior Ukrainian official said on Tuesday his country and Russia had agreed to exchange prisoners from the conflict in eastern Ukraine over the next month. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**2. Ukraine language law debate spills into UN Security Council.**

16.07.2019. A clash over a new Ukrainian language law played out Tuesday in the U.N. Security Council, where Ukrainian and Russian representatives sparred over whether the legislation promotes Ukrainian unity or jeopardizes the interests of the country's Russian-speaking population. [\(AP\)](#)

**3. Medvedchuk meets Putin to tell about peace plan on Donbas.**

18.07.2019. President of Russia Vladimir Putin held a meeting with Chairman of the Political Council of Opposition Platform – For Life Viktor Medvedchuk as Strana reported. Ukrainian politician visited Russia after Strasbourg to share the experience of the visit of the European Parliament. The talk with the Russian leader coincided with the departure of Belarusian leader Olexander Lukashenko walked by Putin. The meeting took place with the presence of Lukashenko. [\(112 UA\)](#)

**4. Putin widens citizenship offer to all residents of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk Regions.**

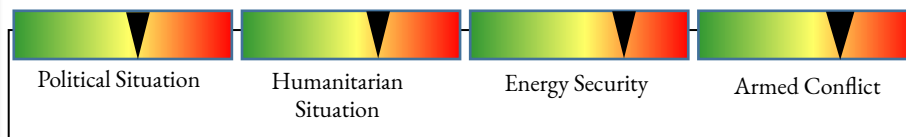
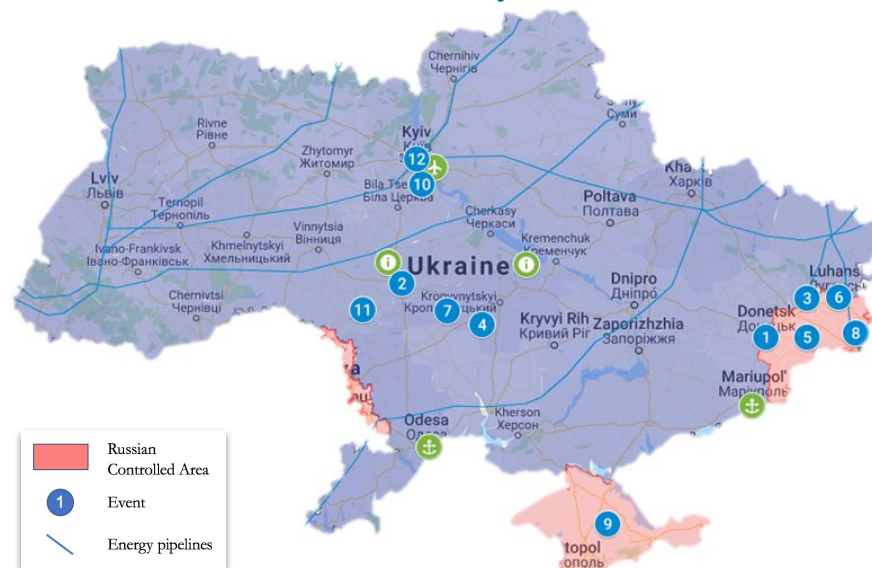
18.07.2019. Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a decree expanding the simplified procedure for obtaining Russian citizenship to include all residents of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions. [\(RFE/RL\)](#)

**5. Russia's fast-tracking of citizenship for Donbas Ukrainians signal to discuss federalization.**

19.07.2019. Moscow's initiative to extend its fast-track citizenship procedure to Ukrainians from any part of Donetsk or Luhansk region signals a desire to federalize Ukraine, the country's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin said. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**6. New ceasefire to begin in Donbas.**

21.07.2019. A new ceasefire in Donetsk and Luhansk regions should begin at 00:01 on the night of Sunday, July 21. An agreement on this was reached in Minsk on July 17 at a meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) to resolve the situation in the Donbas. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *After winning presidential election (73% of the vote) in April, president Zelenskiy and his previously little-known party (Servant of the People) seem likely to score a massive victory in snap parliamentary election. Considering reforming almost all sectors, pressing ahead with digitization, fighting corruption and limiting the influence oligarchs have on Ukrainian politics, his party needs an absolute majority. Whether he achieves his goals depends on governing alone. But at least there is a possibility to form a coalition and if this happens with pro-Russia party, there may emerge a possibility of a U-turn movement toward Russia.*
- *Determined on July 17 at a meeting of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), a new ceasefire begins at 00:01 on the night of Sunday, July 21. Taking the importance of ensuring peace and tranquility for the population into account, this ceasefire shows clearly that both parties want to have the will of ending the crisis through diplomatic channels. For sure, this is supposed to strengthen new government's hand.*

**7. If Zelenskyy's serious about reform, he'll ditch the cronies.**

16.07.2019. A political proverb holds that not only must a leader be above suspicion but also that, as Julius Caesar stated, "Caesar's wife must be above suspicion." In other words, leaders are judged by those closest to them, and Zelenskyy's mishandling of this matter is destroying his "brand" and will impede his reform agenda. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**8. Expectations, Hopes and Concerns of the Donbas: Trend Data of Social Attitudes in 2017-2018 and State Policy Recommendations.**

17.07.2019. In general, residents of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts perceive the war as a natural disaster that suddenly landed on their heads and gravely changed their lives for the worse. Among the most widespread complaints were low salaries, the absence of work with decent pay, and the outflow of youth to other regions in Ukraine. [\(UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS\)](#)

**9. British Worries Over Crimea Were Dismissed by Kiev – Archives.**

18.07.2019. London warned Kiev of dire consequences, when in 1995 Ukraine suspended Crimea's autonomy and deposed popularly elected Crimean President, but the warning was dismissed by Ukrainian leaders, as the UK government papers released by the National Archives reveal. [\(SPUTNIK\)](#)

**10. What's On The Table On Upcoming Russia-Ukraine Negotiations? – OpEd.**

19.07.2019. Russia seems to be ready to negotiate the status of Crimea. It is definitely prepared to discuss the future of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic and Lugansk People's Republic, but first of all it will go into the prisoner swap with Ukraine. [\(EURASIA REVIEW\)](#)

**11. Belarus: Springboard or Casus Belli for Russian Aggression Against Ukraine?.**

21.07.2019. Ukrainian military commanders have been looking at these developments collectively and view them as potential preparation for the next phase of Russian aggression against Ukraine. [\(THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION\)](#)

**12. Ukraine parliamentary vote: Fresh start or a U-turn?.**

21.07.2019. Sunday's parliamentary vote in Ukraine will mark a turning point for the country. The legislature may gain many new young faces — or see pro-Russia elements receive a boost in support. [\(DW\)](#)



**KEY DATES**

**21 July 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Zelensky has ultimatum for Donbass, but is he in a position to talk?**

10.07.2019. Zelensky says if the self-proclaimed Lugansk and Donetsk People's Republics (LPR and DPR) want to restore an economic relationship with Kiev, they have to first return the businesses located in their territories under government control. [\(RT\)](#)

**2. Putin: rapprochement between Russia and Ukraine is inevitable.**

10.07.2019. In an interview for a new film by American Director Oliver Stone "In the struggle for Ukraine" (Revealing Ukraine) Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the rapprochement of the Russian Federation with Ukraine is inevitable [\(UAWIRE\)](#)

**3. Russia's Putin, Ukraine's Zelenskiy discuss ending conflict in eastern Ukraine.**

11.07.2019. Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's leader Volodymyr Zelenskiy held their first telephone conversation on Thursday and discussed settling the conflict in eastern Ukraine and the return of prisoners, the Kremlin said. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**4. Russian PM Medvedev calls options to conclude gas contracts with Ukraine.**

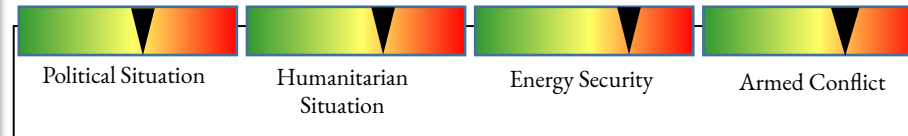
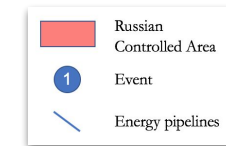
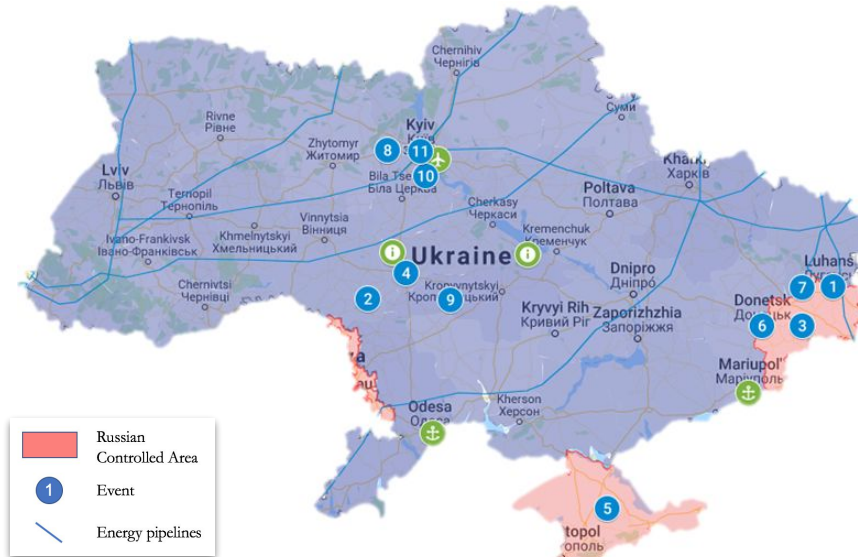
11.07.2019. The simplest option is the preservation of existing terms of the contract, as he said. The second option is to create a consortium, which was discussed earlier [\(112.UA\)](#)

**5. Russia conducting operation to force Ukraine to restore water supplies to Crimea – Information Resistance.**

12.07.2019. Russia is actively lobbying for the restoration of water supplies to Russia-occupied Crimea using the North-Crimean Canal, the public organization Information Resistance (IR) has said. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**6. Ukrainian delegation demonstrates 'constructive approach' at meeting on Donbass - expert.**

13.07.2019. The Ukrainian delegation at a meeting in Paris on Friday between assistants to the leaders of the Normandy Quartet countries (Germany, France, Russia, Ukraine) demonstrated a constructive approach to resolving the situation in Donbass [\(TASS\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *After having a visit to Stanytsia Lubanska, a crossing-point to the non-government-controlled areas in eastern Ukraine, and meeting with Ukrainian soldiers on 7 July 2019, the President of the European Council Donald Tusk joined EU-Ukraine Summit on 8 July 2019 together with President Volodymyr Zelensky. Considering agenda topics, the summit had a wide range of hot issues. Generally speaking, leaders reaffirmed the strength of the political and economic ties between the EU and Ukraine. While regarding Russia as responsible for the main problems with Ukraine, EU stressed the disengagement of forces near Stanitsa Lubanska as a positive development concerning ongoing crisis in the eastern Ukraine.*
- *In Zelensky's very first speech, he has dwelled on disbanding parliament and calling early elections. To date, it was undoubtedly his most consequential decision. According to the latest figures, Zelensky's "Servant of the People" party leads in all regions with 48.5 percent overall. But for an outright majority, this seems not be enough. It is highly possible that Zelensky would reconsider his successive objectives and incorporate former PM Yulia Tymoshenko's party or Vladislav Vakarchuk's new Holos into his plan.*

**7. Dawn Breaks on New Era in EU-Russia Relations.**

08.07.2019. The European Union is taking up a defensive position. This is not isolationism but pragmatism, which signals a revision of the ideas at its heart and a sharp decrease in any desire to project power, including soft power. For Russia-EU relations, this will mean a period in which any kind of ambition will become irrelevant. Efforts will now be focused on reducing expenditure and risks. [\(CARNEGIE EUROPE\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**8. EU-Ukraine summit.**

08.07.2019. At the 21st EU-Ukraine summit in Kyiv, leaders reaffirmed the strength of the political and economic ties between the EU and Ukraine. They discussed the implementation of the association agreement and the way ahead for EU-Ukraine relations. [\(EUROPEAN COUNCIL\)](#)

**9. 10 Things To Know 10 Days Before The Snap Elections.**

11.07.2019. Ukraine's snap parliamentary elections will take place in 10 days time. We have prepared a "survival guide" for you: here are 10 key things to know ahead of the vote. [\(UKRAINE WORLD\)](#)

**10. Ukraine elections: Can Zelensky's popularity help his party sweep up parliamentary seats?**

13.07.2019. According to the latest figures, Mr Zelensky's "Servant of the People" party leads in all regions and with 48.5 per cent overall. Given Ukraine's mixed PR and first-past-the-post electoral system, that isn't enough to give Mr Zelensky an outright majority. Instead he'll likely have to rely on former PM Yulia Tymoshenko's party (polling 6.2 per cent) – or perhaps on Holos, another new party headed by rock star Vladislav Vakarchuk, which may or may not break the 5 per cent needed to get into parliament. [\(INDEPENDENT\)](#)

**11. Let's lustrate them all: Zelensky suggests purging all high-ranking politicians from Poroshenko's time.**

13.07.2019. President Zelenskyy's proposal on strengthening lustration provoked mixed reactions both in Ukraine, where it was criticized by party leaders and Foreign Affairs Minister Pavlo Klimkin, and in the West. According to a draft law he submitted to parliament, the Lustration Law Act should be extended to include all high-ranking officials who held positions since 23 February 2014 through 19 May 2019. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**KEY DATES**

**21 July 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**8 July 2019** - EU - Ukraine Summit

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Scenario of Sea Breeze 2019 drills changed due to Russia's actions.**

02.07.2019. The plan of the Sea Breeze 2019 Ukrainian-U.S. drills, which began on Monday, July 1, has been changed due to Russia's actions in the Black Sea, according to the official website of the Ukrainian State Border Service.

[\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**2. Ukraine's landmines endangering children.**

02.07.2019. Ukraine ranks third in the world for mine-related casualties, behind Afghanistan and Syria. [\(BBC\)](#)

**3. Putin signs law suspending INF treaty by Russia.**

03.07.2019. Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed into law the bill suspending the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty by Russia. The law specifies that the head of state will decide on Russia's renewal of the treaty. The law comes into force on the day of its official publication. [\(TASS\)](#)

**4. Ukraine, Canada to work on expansion of FTA agreement to services, investments.**

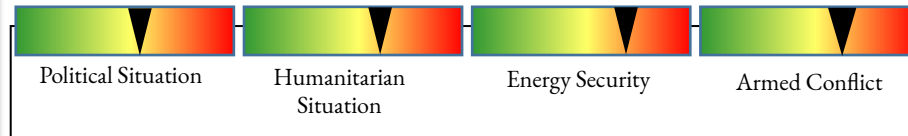
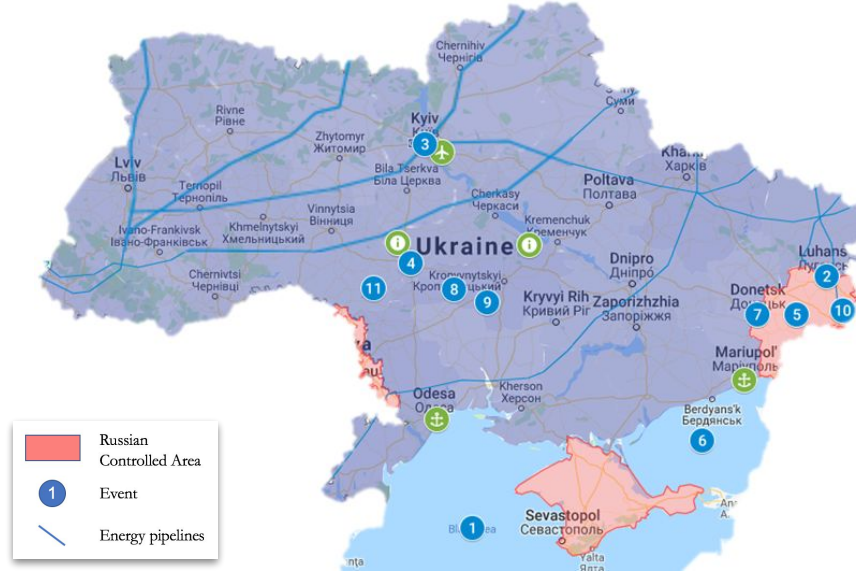
03.07.2019. Ukraine and Canada will work on deepening economic cooperation and expansion of the bilateral free trade area (FTA) agreement to the sphere of services and investments, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**5. Ukraine ready for peace, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy tells DW.**

05.07.2019. With conflict simmering in the east, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy is hoping to secure a political solution to end a separatist insurgency. He told DW that he has the support of German Chancellor Angela Merkel. [\(DW\)](#)

**6. NATO-Russia Council meets in Brussels.**

05.07.2019. The NATO-Russia Council, which brings together all 29 NATO Allies and Russia, met in Brussels on 5 July 2019 to discuss Ukraine, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, and transparency and risk reduction. "Today we discussed three topics: Ukraine, the INF Treaty, and transparency and risk reduction. Ukraine remains the first item of discussion." [\(NATO OFFICIAL WEBSITE\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *By means of "The 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)", the United States and the Soviet Union had destroyed a total of 2,692 missiles (short, medium and intermediate-range) by the treaty's implementation deadline of June 1, 1991.*
- *With the law signed by Putin on July 2019, INF was suspended by Russia specifying that the head of state will decide on Russia's renewal of the treaty. Acting arbitrarily lots of times in different issues, Russia continues distracting key players from topic subjects, canalizing them to artificial agenda and gaining accomplishments.*

**7. OSCE PA committee approves resolution criticizing Russia over Ukraine, INF Treaty.**

06.07.2019. The Political Affairs and Security Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly approved the resolution on Saturday, which urges to halt hostilities in east Ukraine and says that Moscow does not allegedly implement the Minsk peace accords and besides, violates the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty. [\(TASS\)](#)

**8. Ukraine informs UN Security Council that law on Ukrainian language not within Security Council competence.**

06.07.2019. Volodymyr Yelchenko, the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN, has sent a letter to the chairman of the UN Security Council [Peru in July] stating that the law on ensuring the functioning of the Ukrainian language as a state language does not threaten international security and is not within the competence of the Security Council. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**9. Five Reasons Why Investors Are Giving Ukraine Another Look.**

01.07.2019. The third Ukraine Reform Conference is about to kick off in Toronto on July 2, co-hosted by the Canadian and Ukrainian governments, and involving the participation of Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. [\(ATLANTIC COUNCIL\)](#)

**10. Ukraine's New President Needs a Strategy on Donbas—and Fast.**

03.07.2019. Zelensky is trying to find balance on the incendiary issue of the Donbas. During his visits to Europe, he adhered carefully to the previous foreign policy line, calling on European leaders to keep up pressure on Russia through sanctions. But at home, he is more open to compromise, and is trying to find allies among the oligarchs. [\(CARNegie EUROPE\)](#)

**11. Why Ukraine's New Language Law is a Good Thing.**

04.07.2019. Ukraine's new language law helps its national language after centuries of oppression. Russian and other languages will be freely used but Ukrainian gets more incentives. [\(UKRAINE WORLD\)](#)



## KEY DATES

**21 July 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

## KEY EVENTS

### 1. What Ukraine's new parties bring to the table.

25.06.2019. Its slogan - "let's do them together" (a hint on ordinary citizens opposing seasoned politicians) - is aimed at satisfying the public's desire for new faces in politics. The party's program consists of sixteen ideas to "turn Ukraine into a free, independent, and successful dream land." ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

### 2. Ukraine fury as Russia gets back Council of Europe voting rights.

25.06.2019. Five years after Russia had its voting rights removed because of the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine, the Council of Europe's parliamentary assembly has voted to restore them. ([BBC](#))

### 3. Transnistria's leader calls for Russian peacekeepers' continued presence in the region.

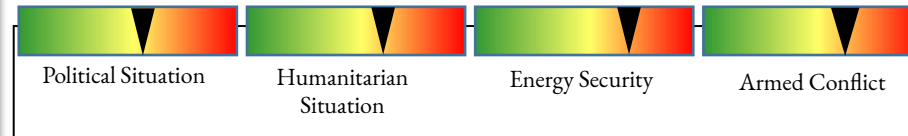
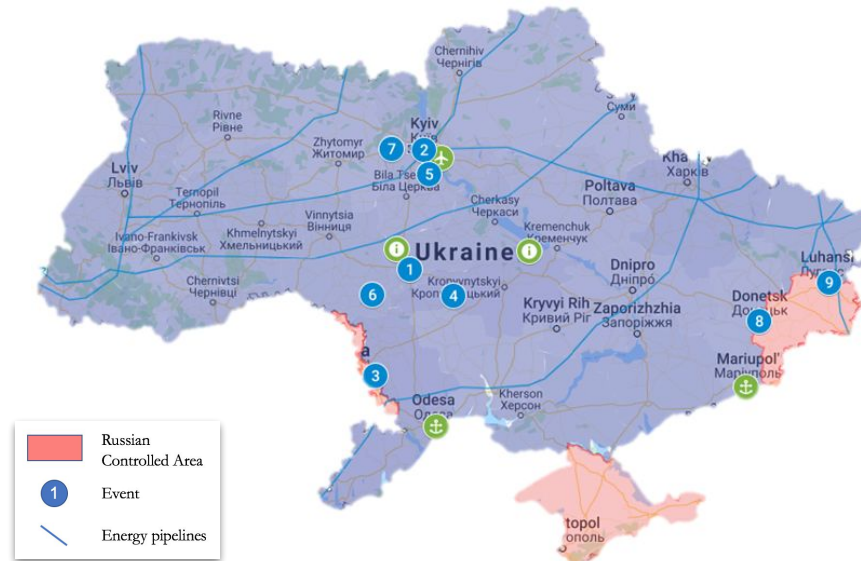
25.06.2019. Leader of the unrecognized Transnistrian Republic, Vadim Krasnoselsky, has spoken out in favor of preserving the existing framework of the peacekeeping operation in the region conducted under Russia's umbrella. ([TASS](#))

### 4. Putin finally tells Russians the truth (sort of).

26.06.2019. Russia fell short by about \$50 billion as a result of these restrictions during these years, starting in 2014. The European Union lost \$240 billion, the US \$17 billion (we have a small volume of trade with them) and Japan \$27 billion. All this affects employment in these countries, including the EU: they are losing our market," Putin claimed, not very coherently. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

### 5. US Signs New Conventional Weapons Destruction Agreement with Ukraine.

26.06.2019. US and Ukraine signed a new memorandum of understanding on conventional weapons stockpile management- The memorandum, which was signed by US Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs R. Clarke Cooper and Ukraine Ministry of Foreign Affairs Acting Director of the Directorate of International Security Ruslan Nimchynskyi, sets \$4 million toward the construction of six explosive storehouses for the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense. ([SPUTNIK](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- After the annexation of Crimea, in April 2014 the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) deprived the Russian delegation of the right to vote and excluded its representatives from all governing bodies of the Assembly. But on 25 June 2019, the PACE adopted a resolution titled "Strengthening the decision-making process of the Parliamentary Assembly concerning credentials and voting" canceling the mechanism for imposing sanctions on Russia and enabling Russian parliamentarians to take part in the work of the Assembly without fulfilling any conditions concerning the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- Being baffled with the resolution regarding the return of Russia to PACE, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky expressed his feelings with the words: "It is a pity that our European partners did not bear us and acted in a different way". Although Zelensky has discussed this issue with the two leading actors of Europe (French President and the Federal Chancellor of Germany), it seems that Europe prioritizes its self interest and keeping the doors open for talk and negotiation with Russia.

### 6. Ukraine plans to gradually join all NATO operations and missions.

27.06.2019. Ukraine will remain a reliable partner of NATO and plans to gradually join all NATO operations and missions, and also told of the country's plans to strengthen its participation in the NATO Mission "Resolute Support" in Afghanistan ([UNIAN](#))

### 7. Russia extends counter-sanctions against US, EU & allies through 2020.

28.06.2019. President Vladimir Putin has signed a law prolonging the embargo against Western countries that have imposed anti-Russia sanctions. Restrictions will be in force until the end of next year. ([RT](#))

### 8. Putin, Macron discussed Ukraine, Normandy Format talks at Osaka meeting - Kremlin.

29.06.2019. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron, discussed Ukraine and the need to re-energize the so-called Normandy Four format of talks on the Ukrainian conflict settlement ([SPUTNIK](#))

## OPINIONS

### 9. Everything you know about the Donbas is wrong.

27.06.2019. Almost every image of eastern Ukraine involves suffering of some sort: old people waiting in endless queues for tiny pensions; internally displaced persons living in cramped temporary housing that is no longer temporary; Ukrainian troops operating with few modern conveniences. Since 2014, most people with education and means have fled the region. One could be forgiven for dismissing it as backward and hopeless. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

### 10. Understanding Volodymyr Zelensky's Foreign Policy Priorities for Ukraine.

25.06.2019. Volodymyr Zelensky's priority is domestic, not foreign policy, so his approach to international relations is only starting to take shape. A better understanding of Zelensky's foreign policy goals will only be achievable until after the early parliamentary elections in July, and it is unclear when they will be fully set out and how he will differentiate achievable intentions from electoral promises. ([Chatham House](#))

**KEY DATES**

**21 July 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Kremlin: Putin adopts wait-and-see approach with Ukrainian President Zelensky.**

17.06.2019. Dmitry Peskov said that Putin has taken a wait-and-see attitude towards Ukraine’s new president, because it is not yet clear what his approach will be towards the essential items on the agenda ([UAWIRE](#))

**2. France stands against Russia’s exit from Council of Europe, says president Macron.**

17.06.2019. France is striving to prevent Russia’s withdrawal from the Council of Europe (CE) because it would contradict the interests of the Russian citizens, French President Emmanuel Macron told ([TASS](#))

**3. One month into the Zelenskiy presidency and Ukraine’s still here.**

17.06.2019. One month into Zelenskiy’s presidency, those questions still require answers, and we have yet to see much in the way of policies as the political focus has turned to the parliamentary elections. However, his pronouncements largely have been reassuring. ([BROOKINGS](#))

**4. Holy wars: Orthodox Church of Ukraine in crisis.**

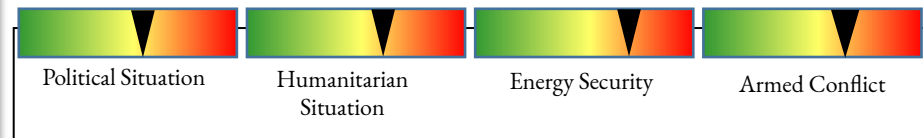
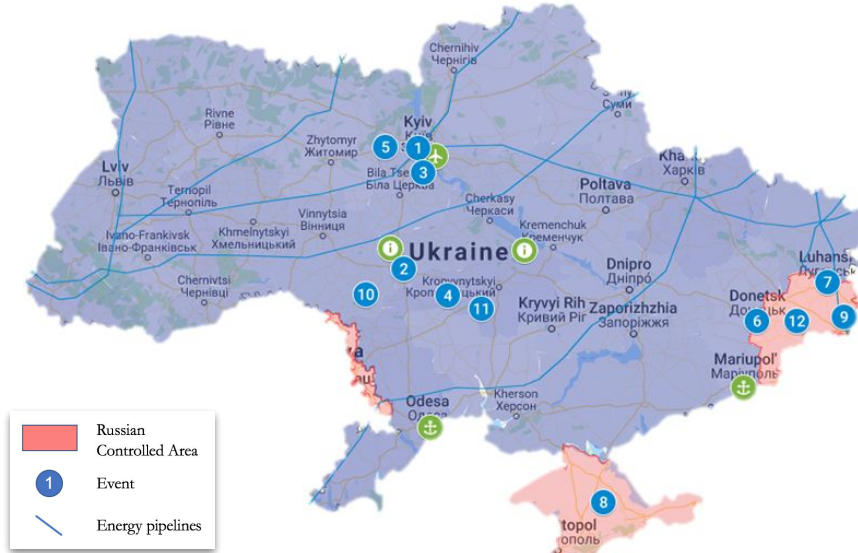
18.06.2019. June 20, 2019, Patriarch Filaret plans to hold a local church council, which should restore the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP). In fact, Filaret is going to zeroize what ex-president Petro Poroshenko has been working on for so long. ([112 UA](#))

**5. Pentagon To Give Additional \$250 Million In Military Aid To Ukraine.**

18.06.2019. The U.S. Department of Defense says it plans to provide \$250 million to enhance Ukraine’s military capabilities as the nation continues to battle Russia-backed separatists in its eastern regions. The latest tranche of assistance will strengthen Ukraine’s naval and ground forces through additional training and provision of weapons ([RFE/RL](#))

**6. Lavrov proposes Switzerland mediate talks on lifting Donbass blockade.**

19.06.2019. Russia will welcome Switzerland acting as a mediator in lifting the trade and economic blockade imposed on the Donbass Region, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov ([TASS](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- Beside the measures (economic sanctions, individual restrictive measures) against Russia in response to the crisis in Ukraine, EU has also prolonged the restrictive sanctions related to the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia until 23 June 2020. Limited to Crimea and Sevastopol regions, measures cover imports of products, investment, tourism services, exports of certain goods and technologies. Delimiting their efforts with only soft power practices, EU countries seem to get on course of diplomatic efforts. Due to both their strategic interdependence on some areas, such as energy, the EU might not be expected to exercise such effective measures, which limits the effects on Russia.
- After having one month in office, Ukraine’s new president is still making clear of his political priorities. Opting for “wait and see policy”, Russia does not take a significant step on Donbas and Crimea issues. Considering Kremlin’s cost/benefit calculation, Putin presumably waits until parliamentary elections on 21 July to make a change in policy.

**7. Zelensky at meeting with YES board announces holding investment forum in Sept to restore Donbas.**

19.06.2019. Zelensky held a meeting with the members of the board of the Yalta European Strategy (YES), familiarizing those present with the key priorities of his activities, including establishing peace in Ukraine, protecting its sovereignty and restoring territorial integrity, holding systemic reforms, strengthening the state’s defense capability. ([INTERFAX](#))

**8. EU Prolongs Russia Sanctions Over Ukraine Conflict, Crimea.**

20.06.2019. EU leaders have agreed to prolong sanctions on Russia for its actions in Ukraine. Meeting in Brussels, the leaders extended the bloc’s economic sanctions against Russia, which mainly target the country’s energy and banking sectors, by six months. They also agreed to renew sanctions for another year an investment ban on the Crimea region. ([RFE/RL](#))

**9. Merkel backs Ukraine’s Zelenskiy in Russia dispute.**

20.06.2019. Merkel backed Zelenskiy’s remarks that sanctions against Russia — imposed for its illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and its role in an insurgency in eastern Ukraine — must remain in place. ([DW](#))

**10. Intelligence agencies of Ukraine and NATO members sign memorandum to counter Russian aggression.**

21.06.2019. Representatives of the intelligence agencies of NATO member countries and Ukraine signed a joint memorandum providing for intensified cooperation to timely identify signs of Russia’s preparation for expanding armed aggression against Ukraine. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**OPINIONS**

**11. Taking Stock of Zelenskiy’s Presidency.**

18.06.2019. Two months after his clear election victory and one month after his inauguration as president, Ukraine and the rest of the world continue to puzzle over the personality, outlook, and expertise of political newcomer Volodymyr Zelenskiy. After only thinly veiled skepticism in the run-up to the second round of the election, most national and EU officials are now trying to give Zelenskiy the benefit of the doubt. ([CARNEGIE EUROPE](#))

**12. Lessons from the Mueller report on Russian political warfare.**

20.06.2019. The Russian government is engaged in political warfare against the West. The Kremlin’s tool-kit of influence is a twenty-first century adaptation of Soviet era “active measures,” and includes: disinformation and propaganda campaigns, cyber warfare, political infiltration, and the use of corruption to influence politics. ([BROOKINGS](#))



**KEY DATES**

**21 June 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Russia sanctions debate deepens Germany's east-west divide.**

11.06.2019. State premiers in eastern Germany want to end crippling sanctions against Russia. With the far-right Alternative for Germany gaining ground in the east, that position has more to do with politics ([DW](#))

**2. Russia sanctions proved inefficient, can't bring peace to Ukraine – German state PM.**

12.06.2019. The political ineffectiveness of the sanctions has long been proven; their declared goal, much-needed peace in Ukraine, is as far away as ever," Thuringia Prime Minister Bodo Ramelow ([RT](#))

**3. Russia Expanding Military Buildup on Crimea.**

12.06.2019. Satellite imagery shows Russia has moved five anti-air craft missile batteries along with additional troops and other weapons in to Crimea, and is working to improve old Soviet-era bases in the region in what intelligence officials called a "significant" buildup ([CFR](#))

**4. Minsk agreements must be implemented based on principle of reciprocity, starting with security.**

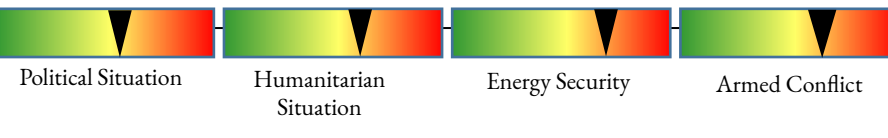
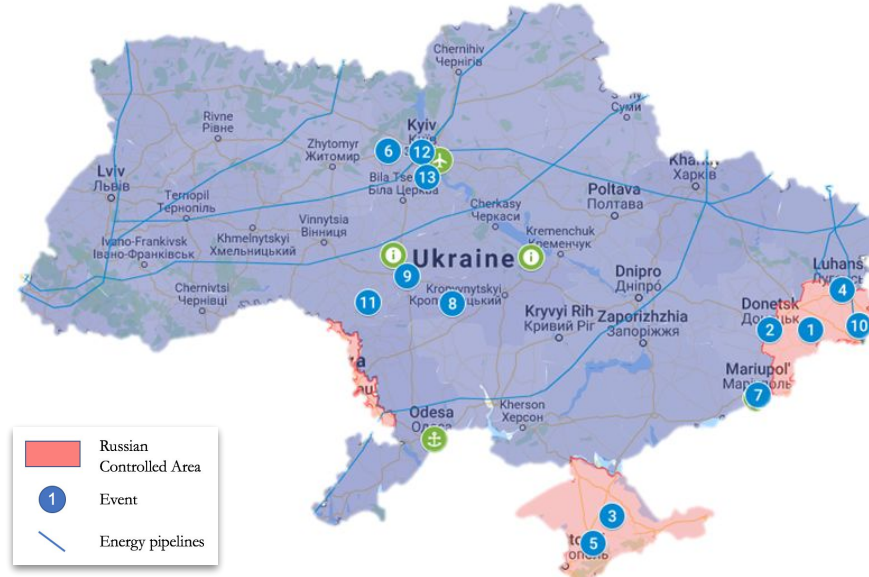
12.06.2019. "All processes for the implementation of the Minsk agreements must be exclusively based on the principle of reciprocity. This starts with the part of the Minsk agreements dealing with security, ceasefire, the withdrawal of Russian forces and equipment from Donbas. ([INTERFAX](#))

**5. Weakening in Chisinau could facilitate spread of hybrid Russian influence, increase risks for Ukraine's southern regions – Foreign ministry.**

12.06.2019. Ukraine's Foreign Affairs Ministry has said the political weakening of Chisinau could create a basis for the spread of Russian hybrid influence, which could in the future be dangerous for Ukraine's southern regions. ([INTERFAX](#))

**6. Putin Says Moscow to Restore Ties With Kiev Regardless of Relations With Ukrainian Elites.**

13.06.2019. Russia will restore its ties with Ukraine regardless of its relations with the neighbouring country's elites, Russian President Vladimir Putin said in an interview with the Mir broadcaster, released on Thursday. ([SPUTNIK](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Putin defined "Russophobic thoughts and ideas" as the reason for why Ukraine would not try to solve domestic problems. Underlining "two brotherly nations" expression about Russia and Ukraine, Putin seems to make a goodwill gesture. Still it is clear that Putin expects Ukraine to take the "first" step. So, both creating artificial agenda, trying to obtain benefit from this and expecting respondent country to privilege seems to be ironic. That Russia takes small but concrete steps would be very welcomed and would probably decrease the tensions in the region easily and quickly.*
- *Recently, ending to the European Union's economic sanctions against Russia becomes a current issue. Having a broad repercussion in Europe, especially in Germany which has significant trading volume with Russia, issue of sanctions seem to spawn disagreements among European countries. If realized, Ukraine would possibly lose one of the main tools strengthening its hand against Russia and expose itself to more "hybrid warfare" effects.*

**7. Good Russian-Ukrainian relations will inevitably return — Putin.**

13.06.2019. Putin also expressed hope that Ukraine's new political leadership would not try to conceal its reluctance to solve domestic problems behind "Russophobic thoughts and ideas" ([TASS](#))

**8. Party of Ukraine's president can win parliamentary majority: poll.**

14.06.2019. The new party set up by Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who took office last month, could win a majority in a parliamentary election due on July 21 ([REUTERS](#))

**9. Under optimistic scenario Ukraine could become EU member by 2035.**

15.06.2019. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has said that Ukraine would have a real chance of getting the European prospect after 2025, and maybe by 2035 the country could become a member of the European Union ([INTERFAX](#))

**OPINIONS**

**10. Is Russia Changing Its Calculus in Eastern Ukraine?.**

11.06.2019. Amid expectations that Russia will test Ukraine's new president with escalatory actions, it appears that its calculus is to wait for Kyiv's administration to make the first move – while quietly helping the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics entrench themselves economically. ([INTERNATIONAL CRISIS GROUP](#))

**11. A new beginning for Ukraine.**

12.06.2019. Newly-inaugurated Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy set the standard when he called for "a strong, powerful, free Ukraine, which is not the younger sister of Russia, which is not a corrupt partner of Europe, but our independent Ukraine. ([THE WASHINGTON TIMES](#))

**12. One Ukraine? Think Again..**

13.06.2019. The persistence of this regional split has posed the most serious challenge to Ukraine's two most important pieces of unfinished business since the collapse of the Soviet Union, which are completing the process of building a full-fledged political nation and "normalizing" relations with Russia ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**13. Fresh ranking list of political parties.**

14.06.2019. According to the opinion poll held by the "Ranking" group on June 6-9, the support of "Sluha Narodu" (Servant of People) party of President Zelenskiy has slightly decreased. ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))

**KEY DATES**

**21 June 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukrainian troops rehearse Russian invasion scenario from Azov Sea.**

03.06.2019. Troops from Ukraine’s Joint Forces Operation (JFO) practiced repelling a virtual enemy landing force coming from the Azov Sea ([UAWIRE](#))

**2. Russian gas pipeline divides the West and ‘punishes’ Ukraine.**

04.06.2019. A geopolitical wedge that deepens tensions between the US and Germany. A means to make Europe more dependable on Russia’s energy supplies. ([ALJAZEERA](#))

**3. Merkel Says Supports Nord Stream 2 Pipeline for Russian Gas Delivery to Europe.**

04.06.2019. Germany will have to alter its energy policies in order to ensure secure energy supply and new policies will be introduced until the end of the year, Merkel said on Tuesday at a conference of the Federation of German Industries (BDI). ([SPUTNIK](#))

**4. Ukraine’s new president seeks pro-Western course, peace with Russia.**

04.06.2019. New Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Tuesday he was ready to negotiate with Russia to end the war in eastern Ukraine while sticking to Ukraine’s goal of one day joining the European Union and the NATO alliance. ([REUTERS](#))

**5. New Ukraine Leader Heralds ‘Death of Russian Imperialism,’ Accused of Plagiarism.**

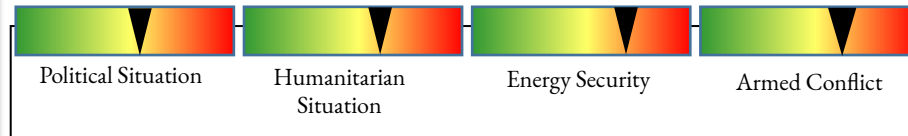
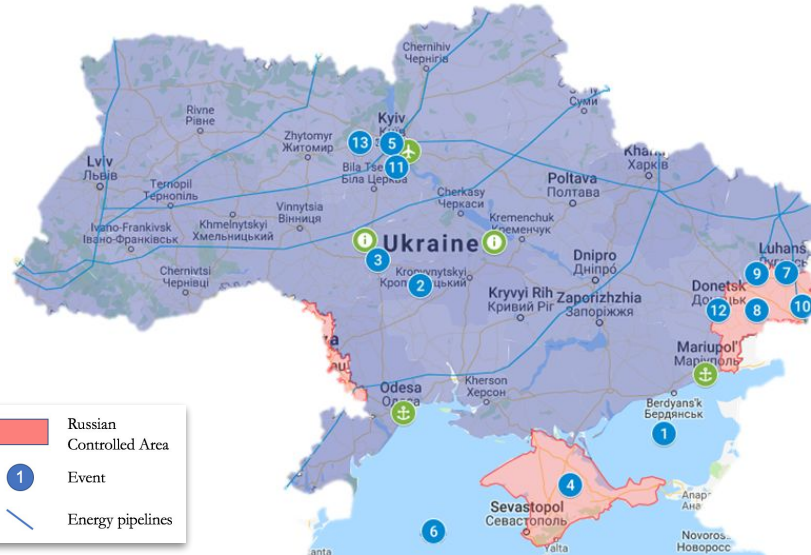
06.06.2019. Zelenskiy’s administration quoted him as saying “Ukraine in the EU would be the death of the Russian imperial project” during talks with top European official Donald Tusk. ([THE MOSCOW TIMES](#))

**6. Ukraine builds a new naval base in the Black Sea.**

06.06.2019. The fourth Ukrainian Naval Forces base is built in Ochakiv in the Mykolaiv region (3 bases are in Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Berdyansk) ([UAWIRE](#))

**7. Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) in Minsk to work on new mechanism for ceasing fire in Donbas.**

06.06.2019. Ukrainian envoy to the TCG in Minsk Leonid Kuchma has announced the TCG has reached an agreement to work on a new mechanism to cease fire in Donbas, eastern Ukraine. ([UNIAN](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Considering the increase in military activities -some are blatant violation of the Minsk agreements- in Eastern Ukraine, it may be deduced that Russia is trying to prevent Ukraine’s new administration from thinking straight on developing policy for Donbas region and to force Zelensky to rule out political solutions. “Need to preserve the cease-fire” is the reiteration of Zelensky as Ukraine’s position in this regard. But Kremlin’s goal (in Lenin’s famous words) still seems to be sustainment of the situation in which “the worse it is, the better it is for us”.*
- *“Strategic course to achieve full-fledged membership in the EU and NATO” is the motivation of Ukraine through the path of western partnership. Though NATO offers “open door” policy for countries that aspire to membership, the path to reach that objective faces serious obstacles. Seeing that Kyiv will not return to Kremlin’s orbit, Russia implements Plan B which would explain Russia’s hybrid war. In this respect, Moscow seems to continue to make Ukraine appear an unattractive partner for the West.*

**8. Zelenskiy Vows ‘Tough’ Response As More Ukrainian Soldiers Die In The East.**

07.06.2019. Ukraine says fresh clashes with Russia-backed separatists in the country’s east have claimed the lives of two of its soldiers, raising to six the number of Ukrainian troops reported killed this week and prompting President Zelenskiy to urge Moscow to “rein in” the separatists. ([RFE/RL](#))

**9. Ex-member of Ukraine’s intelligence says over 120,000 Russian troops in Donbas, forecasts escalation.**

08.06.2019. An ex-member of Ukraine’s military intelligence says over 120,000 Russian troops are currently deployed in occupied areas of Donbas, eastern Ukraine; he forecasts further escalation. ([UNIAN](#))

**OPINIONS**

**10. Seven Dangers of Engaging with the Occupied Donbas—and Opportunities for the New Ukrainian President.**

04.06.2019. Ukraine’s new president says he wants to end the Russian-backed war in the country’s east. However, it won’t be easy. There are at least seven dangers of engaging with the occupied territories of the Donbas. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**11. Ukraine’s Hard Road to Europe.**

04.06.2019. The National Forum -Transformation of Ukraine has a noble goal: bringing together those who support Ukraine’s future as a democracy, secure and sovereign, with prosperity resting on the rule of law and free markets, and part of the European family. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**12. War on terms: who’s fighting against Ukraine in Donbas – terrorists, rebels, insurgents?.**

04.06.2019. According to the report, the situation within the territory of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol “would amount to an international armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation.” ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**13. NATO’s Ukraine challenge.**

06.06.2019. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy visited Brussels on June 4 and 5, where he met with the leadership of the European Union and NATO. He reaffirmed Kyiv’s goal of integrating into both institutions—goals enshrined earlier this year as strategic objectives in Ukraine’s constitution. ([BROOKINGS](#))



**KEY DATES**

**21 June 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. U.S. ready to cooperate with Ukraine in improving its military capabilities.**

29.05.2019. Kurt Volker, the United States Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations, has noted that the United States is ready to cooperate with Ukraine in further providing it with defensive lethal weapons ([INTERFAX](#))

**2. Saakashvili wary of political career in Ukraine.**

29.05.2019. Former Georgian President, ex-Governor of the Odessa Region Mikhail Saakashvili said he is not willing to pursue a political career in Ukraine, as he believes "it doesn't end well" ([TASS](#))

**3. Ukrainian parliament defies new president, keeps Cabinet.**

30.05.2019. Ukrainian lawmakers on Thursday refused to accept the Cabinet's resignation, in another snub to the nation's newly sworn-in president. ([AP](#))

**4. Factbox: New Ukraine president picks top reformist, men with oligarch ties.**

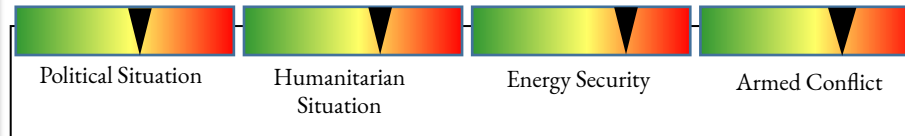
31.05.2019. Ukraine's new President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has appointed a mix of people to his core team, which includes a reformist former finance minister, men with ties to a controversial oligarch and people from his TV production company. ([REUTERS](#))

**5. Zelensky approves new NSDC composition.**

31.05.2019. "Volodymyr Oleksandrovych Zelensky, the president of Ukraine, is the head of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine," the decree reads. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**6. Poroshenko in hot seat, as investigators launch probe into usurpation of power claims.**

31.05.2019. As a result of a claim filed by attorney Andrey Portnov, Ukraine's State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) has launched an investigation against ex-President Pytor Poroshenko over accusations that he attempted to usurp power. ([TASS](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

▪ Stripped of his citizenship by the decree of former Ukraine's president - Petro Poroshenko- in February 2018, Georgia's former president, ex-governor of Ukraine's Odessa Region *Mikhail Saakashvili returns to Kiev on May 28, upon Ukraine's Zelensky cancelation of his predecessor's decision.* In the period of deportation Saakashvili had explained the reason for expulsion with his own words; "The reason why they want to get rid of me is that they don't have a real case against me, because I crossed the path of oligarchs that want to further plunder the country". Zelensky's decision may be seen a respondent reaction and demonstrative reply to the concerns reflecting that "Zelensky has still ties with oligarchs and should sever all the ties with those".

**7. Trilateral Contact Group talks to resume on June 5 .**

01.06.2019. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin said "The Minsk platform will resume its work. As far as I understand, this should happen on June 5". ([UKRINFORM](#))

**8. 'We are not a bridge; we are the West,' a Ukrainian president needs to follow Latvian one in declaring, Portnikov says.**

01.06.2019. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian commentator continues, Ukraine has felt the need to "constantly form some kind of bridge between Russia and Europe" and equally often suggests that the Kremlin has not recognized "all the advantages which would open before it and it would gain if it give [Ukraine] the chance to play the role of a bridge." ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**OPINIONS**

**9. Zelenskiy's Presidency Is a Chance for Europe.**

29.05.2019. Zelenskiy's presidency is already becoming symbolic of today's Ukraine. It is an interesting phenomenon that reflects the state of the country's political and security institutions. The electoral result is producing an impact not only on Ukraine but also on the EU's Eastern neighborhood more broadly, and beyond. ([CARNEGIE EUROPE](#))

**10. Why Putin wants to make 'new Russians' out of Ukrainians.**

31.05.2019. It all began in late April with a decree from Russian President Vladimir Putin. Since then — with Moscow's support — it has become easier for the people in the eastern Donbass region, or the "People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk" to get a Russian passport. ([DW](#))

**11. What Ukraine's New President Cannot Afford to Overlook.**

31.05.2019. Proclaiming his commitment to overhauling the entire system, the new president has announced five short-term priorities: change the electoral law, restore criminal liability for unlawful enrichment, and remove the parliamentary immunity of deputies, as well as reform the legal system and eradicate corruption. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**KEY DATES**

**21 June 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukrainian PM Groyzman announces resignation.**

20.05.2019. Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Groyzman has announced his intention to resign following a meeting of the government this Wednesday, May 22. ([INTERFAX](#))

**2. Ukraine's president calls new parliamentary election.**

21.05.2019. Ukraine's new president on Tuesday formally ordered Ukraine's parliament to dissolve and called an early election for July, hoping to ride the wave of his electoral success to get his supporters into parliament ([AP](#))

**3. Ukraine opens high treason case against Poroshenko over Kerch Strait incident.**

21.05.2019. Ukraine's state investigation bureau has opened a criminal case and started probing possible high treason charges against former Ukrainian President Pyotr Poroshenko over the incident in the Kerch Strait ([TASS](#))

**4. Head of Presidential Administration: Peace agreements with Russia could become matter of national referendum.**

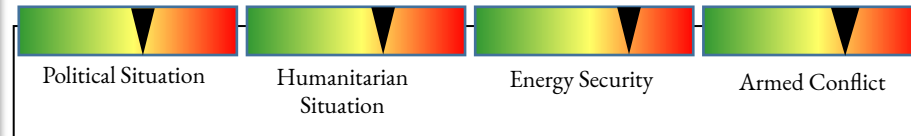
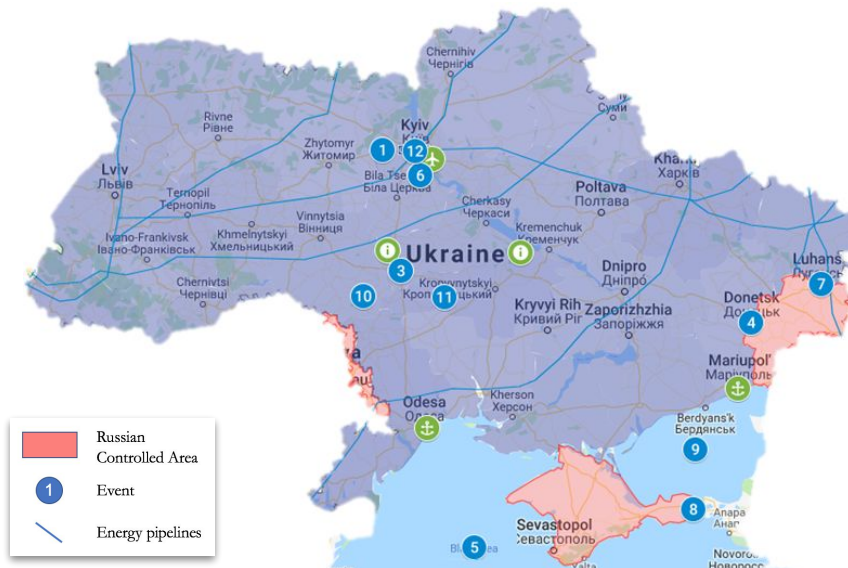
21.05.2019. The head of Zelensky's administration said it should be up to civil society to assess various agreements that concern the military conflict with Russia. Bohdan claimed that there's a need to search for a compromise in Donbas-related matters. However, he stressed that 'there will be no trading territories or people'. ([112UA](#))

**5. NATO to strengthen presence in Azov and Black Seas.**

21.05.2019. NATO will strengthen its presence in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov to help Ukraine resolve the situation in the Black Sea region. ([UKRINFORM](#))

**6. Joint statement by civil society representatives on the first political steps of the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky.**

23.05.2019. Over the past five years, we, the undersigned, members of civil society organizations, have been actively defending Ukraine's sovereignty and national interests in global information space and counteracting the Russian information war. ([UKRAINE CRISIS](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- 27 October 2019 was the originally scheduled date for the election to Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada. In pursuit of his anti-corruption agenda, actor-turned President Volodymyr Zelenskiy dissolved parliament early. Snap elections to the Ukrainian parliament is decided to be held on 21 July 2019. Winning the hearts and minds of Ukrainians in presidential election, Zelenskiy seems to act as quickly as possible before voters' excitement cools down in a short time. On the other hand, asking several top ministers to step down, Zelenskiy aims to get a second breath and wants to be prepared for the prospective projects.
- Immediately after the Zelenskiy's inauguration, a joint statement including "red lines not to be crossed" has been put forward by civil society representatives. Deeply concerned with the first executive decisions taken by the newly-elected president, they want to be reassured about real democratic change. It seems that the brand new president may experience difficulties unless he fulfils what he has promised in the election campaign.

**7. Russia ready for dialogue on normalization of relations with Ukraine.**

23.05.2019. Russia is interested in normalizing relation with Ukraine and is ready for dialogue with it. ([TASS](#))

**8. Russia is ordered to release Ukraine sailors.**

25.05.2019. An international tribunal has ordered Russia to "immediately" release 24 Ukrainian sailors and three naval ships it seized off Crimea in November. ([BBC](#))

**9. UN Convention does not apply to Kerch Strait incident dispute - Foreign Ministry.**

25.05.2019. The dispute resolution procedures provided by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea are not applicable to the incident in the Kerch Strait, and the arbitration that Ukraine requires to convene in connection with it does not have jurisdiction in this area, the Russian Foreign Ministry ([TASS](#))

**10. Ukraine's New Language Law, Explained.**

26.05.2019. In less than two months, the law that protects the Ukrainian language as the only official language is expected to come into force. It has survived attempts to abolish it, both within the Ukrainian parliament and within the UN Security Council (initiated by Russia). However, the law will still be subject to new president Volodymyr Zelensky's "thorough analysis," as well as the analysis of the Council of Europe's Venice Commission. ([HROMADSKIE INTERNATIONAL](#))

**OPINIONS**

**11. How has Populism influenced colitical Culture in Ukraine?.**

22.05.2019. Even though Ukraine has not much experience of a sustainable culture of governance, its political culture back in 1991 was a mix of complex leftovers from foreign dominators. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

**12. Where should Zelenskiy start?.**

23.05.2019. If Zelenskiy follows the old rules, he will fail, but how much leeway should he be allowed? He needs to utilize his current momentum to cross the chasm of misery to move to a more functional system. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))



## KEY DATES

**20 May 2019** - Inauguration of Volodymyr Zelensky as president

**October 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Ukrainian Foreign Minister: Ukraine will withdraw from Minsk agreements if the Council of Europe lifts Russian sanctions.

14.05.2019. Ukraine is willing to desist from implementing the Minsk Agreements if several European states agree to loosen sanctions against the Russian Federation in the Council of Europe, stated Minister of Foreign Affairs Pavlo Klimkin ([UAWIRE](#)).

### 2. Kyiv calls for defense of minority nations in Russia against Moscow oppression.

16.05.2019. The supporters of incumbent Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko are calling on the Verkhovna Rada to adopt an appeal to the UN, PACE, Parliamentary Assembly of NATO, as well as other national parliaments to come to the defense of minority nations in Russia against increasing Moscow oppression of them. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

### 3. U.S. Congress to allocate \$250 mln for Ukraine's defense.

16.05.2019. The House of Representatives of U.S. Congress has started the formal process of approving a draft 2020 defense budget foreseeing \$250 million in assistance for Ukraine, the Ukrainian Embassy in the United States has said. ([INTERFAX](#))

### 4. Council of Europe restores Russia's voting rights.

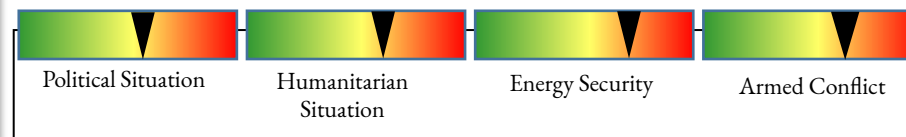
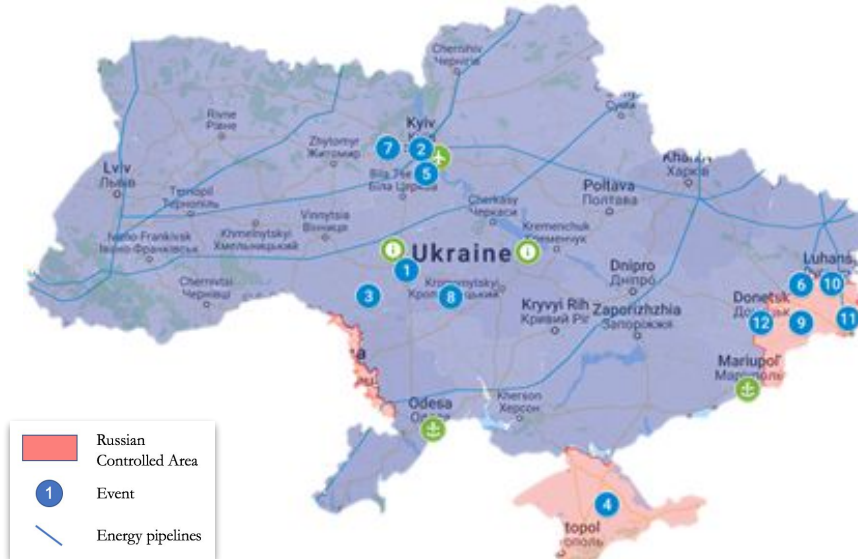
17.05.2019. Russia will remain in the Council of Europe after members of the human rights watchdog reached agreement Friday to resolve a years-long dispute that began after Moscow's annexation of Crimea. ([POLITICO](#))

### 5. Ukraine's coalition collapses in blow to president-elect.

17.05.2019. Ukraine's parliamentary coalition collapsed on Friday in what represents a setback for the president-elect's plans to hold early elections. ([AP](#))

### 6. Poroshenko warns against 'revenge' of oligarch forces.

17.05.2019. "Please don't allow Putin, don't allow oligarchs, to ruin what we have done for these five years, and the results we have reached and the price we have paid for this opportunity and possibility for our nation," Poroshenko said in an interview ([POLITICO](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- Leaving the Council of Europe (CoE) with an annual budget deficit of nearly €33 million (\$37 million), Russia had stopped its financial contributions to CoE in 2017. On 17 May 2019, Committee of Ministers have come together to agree common standards on "human rights, democracy and the rule of law". With the declaration of CoE stressing "all member states should be entitled to participate on an equal basis" in the CoE, Russia is confirmed to stay in CoE Parliamentary Assembly. In terms of human rights violations in Russia, it seems that the decision would have a role in avoiding disastrous effect on civil society in Russia. On the other hand, taking Ukraine's reaction to this statement into account, CoE will likely seesaw between two opinions.
- With the decree allowing residents in rebel-controlled Eastern Ukraine to apply for Russian passports, the international community once again witnessed another Russian "parallel institutions" practice. Unless Ukraine takes required precautions, it seems likely that the Donbas could remain an integral part of Ukraine on paper for the foreseeable future, but at the same time could be increasingly distant from Ukraine.

### 7. Ukraine's FM Klimkin resigns ahead of Zelensky's inauguration.

17.05.2019. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavel Klimkin has tendered his resignation, he said in a video posted on his Facebook page on Friday. "As I have promised, I have just written my letter of resignation," he said. ([RT](#))

### 8. EU Council extends mandate of consultative mission in Ukraine until May 31, 2021.

13.05.2019. The Council of the European Union has extended the mandate of the EU Advisory Mission (EUAM) Ukraine until May 31, 2021, approving its work budget of EUR 54 million for the next two years. ([INTERFAX](#))

## OPINIONS

### 9. Is Russia's passport scheme in Donbas a harbinger of full-scale invasion like in 2008 Georgia?

14.05.2019. There are five Russian-controlled breakaway pseudo-states in the territories of former Soviet republics: the Transnistrian Moldovan Republic (PMR or Transnistria) in Moldova, Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia, Luhansk and Donetsk "people's republics" ("LNR" and "DNR") in Ukraine. And Russia uses two main scenarios of Russian policies to treat the fake statelets it runs in the foreign neighboring states. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

### 10. Is Russia trying to take over Belarus?

14.05.2019. Russia is escalating up its efforts to essentially annex Belarus while also strengthening its grip on eastern Ukraine by offering Russian citizenship to many Ukrainians. ([THE NATIONAL INTEREST](#))

### 11. Eastern Ukraine: Is reintegration still a realistic prospect?

17.05.2019. On 24 April, Russia signed a decree allowing residents of rebel-controlled areas of Eastern Ukraine to apply for Russian passports. This was the latest in a series of steps making the reintegration of the Donbas less likely. ([GLOBAL RISK INSIGHTS](#))

### 12. Nazi-Soviet Pact anniversary can help Zelenskiy heal Ukraine's totalitarian trauma.

17.05.2019. Today's Ukraine is a country short on statehood and long on history, creating inevitable conflicts between those who embrace a post-colonial sense of national identity and the many millions who reject efforts to depict Russians as national enemies and paint the entire Soviet era in a negative light. Nevertheless, there are areas where a broad national consensus may be achievable. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

**KEY DATES**

**October 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine's Cabinet outlaws Russian passports issued in occupied Donbas.**

08.05.2019. Minister for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons Vadym Chernysh has said the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine decided to outlaw Russian passports issued to Ukrainian citizens residing in Russia-occupied areas in Ukraine, namely Luhansk and Donetsk regions. ([UNIAN](#))

**2. Kremlin comments on Kiev's move not to recognize Russian passports for Donbass residents.**

08.05.2019. Moscow will continue issuing Russian passports to Donbass residents despite Kiev's plans to recognize these documents as invalid, Russian Presidential Spokesman Peskov told reporters when asked what the Kremlin's reaction would be if Ukraine refused to recognize such passports. ([TASS](#))

**3. Ukraine assures Hungary language law does not limit minorities' rights.**

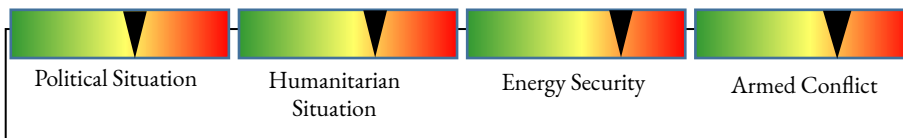
08.05.2019. Ukraine's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vasyl Bodnar has assured Hungary's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó that the law on the state language adopted by Ukraine's parliament does not restrict national minorities' rights. ([INTERFAX](#))

**4. 'Immortal Regiment' vs. 'Immortal Groot': rival rallies mark Victory Day in Ukraine.**

09.05.2019. According to police, 3,000 joined the "Immortal Regiment" march, which is often regarded as part of Russia's propaganda effort, and another 1,000 took part in the "Immortal Groot," a counter-march that mocks the former rally. ([KYIV POST](#))

**5. Germany initiates stepping up peace process in Donbas – ambassador.**

10.05.2019. The German parliament has supported a new initiative to revitalize the peace process in the occupied Donbas, Ukrainian Ambassador to Germany Andriy Melnyk ([INTERFAX](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- In response to the collapse of the Minsk Protocol and to alleviate the ongoing war in eastern Ukraine, a package of measures was endorsed for the implementation of the Minsk Agreements on 11 February 2015. "Immediate and full ceasefire in particular districts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine" is the first measure of agreement. Taking into account the number of daily firefight, it can be understood clearly that it is backbreaking to reach even to the initial point which constitutes the main frame of the agreement. The new policies of the President-elect having the public support in Eastern Ukraine behind him will show if there is a potential to make any changes in the level of conflict.
- By issuing Russian passports to Donbass residents, Russia is obviously violating the Minsk process. The timing of the decision which coincides with publicizing of the election results is meaningful. The fact that a new process to be started by the new elected president will develop against Russia has led Moscow to change its road map. We might expect new developments in the Donbas region leading to another Russian annexation.

**6. Implementation of Minsk agreements by Russia, Ukraine to bring peace in Donbas – Volker.**

09.05.2019. U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker has said that re-integration of areas of Donbas to Ukraine could happen if the Minsk agreements are implemented by Ukraine and Russia, although it is hard for Kyiv to implement all provisions of the agreement due to Russia's hostilities. ([INTERFAX](#))

**7. Merkel: Ukraine to remain the focus of EU and German policy.**

10.05.2019. Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel has assured outgoing Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko during a recent phone conversation that Ukraine would continue to be the focus of EU and German policy. ([UNIAN](#))

**8. Russia, Ukraine naval dispute lands before sea tribunal.**

10.05.2019. Last November, Russia seized three Ukrainian navy ships and captured dozens of sailors, sparking outrage in Ukraine. The case is now being heard at a UN sea tribunal in Hamburg, but Russia has vowed not to show. ([DW](#))

**9. Giuliani cancels trip to Ukraine, denounces 'enemies' of the US in Kiev.**

11.05.2019. Rudy Giuliani has canceled his trip to Kiev where he planned to push the probe into "collusion" between Ukrainian officials and the Democratic Party, stating that the country's new president is surrounded by "enemies" of the US. ([RT](#))

**OPINIONS**

**10. Brotherly Ukraine answers back.**

07.05.2019. Volodymyr Zelenskiy's use of soft power can cause the Kremlin problems. ([CARNEGIE EUROPE](#))

**11. What does the decision to distribute Russian passports in Eastern Ukraine mean?**

10.05.2019. The fact that a new process that will be started by a president who has the support in Eastern Ukraine will probably develop against Russia has led Moscow to change its road map. The prospect of the annexation of Eastern Ukraine by Russia, which has long been behind the curtain and patiently laying milestones, is now more likely than ever. ([Beyond the Horizon](#))



### KEY DATES

**October 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. German MPs offer to place additional UN civilian police contingent in Donbas.

28.04.2019. The FDP invited the German parliament to develop an action plan in addition to the Minsk agreements, indicating mandatory deadlines and consequences in the event of non-compliance. ([112 UA](#))

#### 2. Former NATO Vice Secretary General explains why Ukraine is not accepted into NATO.

29.04.2019. NATO has not been willing to let Ukraine and Georgia become members due to their extremely confrontational relations with Russia, explained former NATO Vice Secretary General Alexander Vershbow. ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 3. Balkan fighters in Eastern Ukraine: Why are they there?

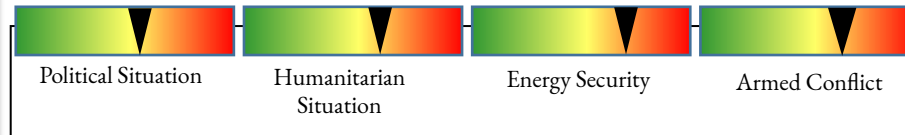
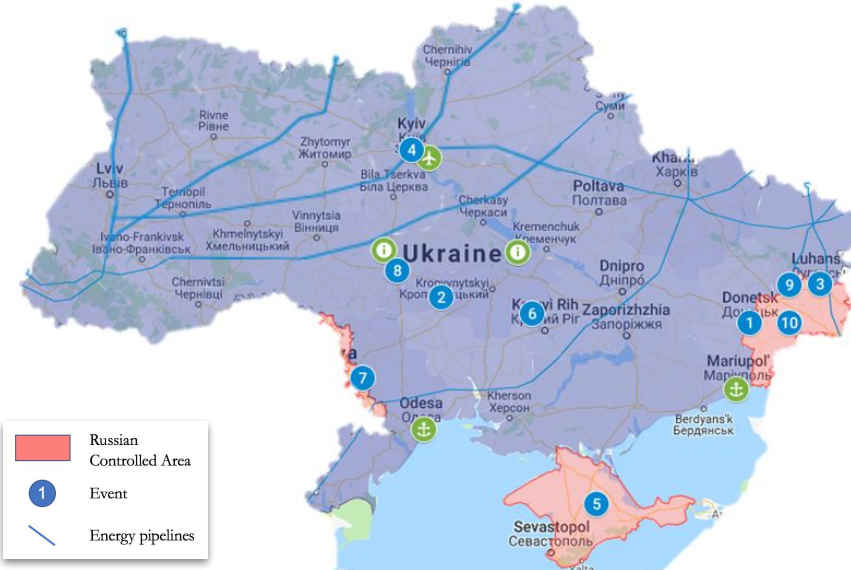
29.04.2019. Many Balkan fighters say they have gone to Eastern Ukraine out of a deep sympathy with the Russian cause there. Serbs from Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina are known to have carried out combat and counterintelligence missions for eight pro-Russian paramilitary units. Among them is the prominent Wagner mercenary group. ([RIDDLE](#))

#### 4. Brussels intends to study content of Ukrainian language law.

30.04.2019. We know that the Ukrainian parliament adopted a new law on language. Now we are waiting for the publication of the final version of this law in order to study its content ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 5. Putin expands list of Ukrainians, others eligible for fast-track Russian passports.

01.05.2019. The list included Ukrainians who once lived in Ukraine's Crimea region before it was annexed by Russia in 2014, and citizens of Iraq, Yemen, Syria and Afghanistan who were born in Russia during the Soviet era. ([REUTERS](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- A draft law on the Ukrainian language providing for the mandatory use of the national language by government agencies passed on April 25 in Ukraine's parliament (the Verkhovna Rada). At first sight, it seems to attract a great deal of attention in many aspects. One of the remarks to this law came from the European Union waiting for the publication of the final version of this law in order to study its content. That EU underlines "Venice Commission" shows that EU has worry for this law in the fields of democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which is extremely important in EU-Ukraine relations.
- One of the visible outcomes of Russia's Hybrid War (namely invisible Russian influence and impact on far-right extremism in Balkans) is foreign fighters in Ukraine. This objective reality may be seen as an indication implying that Russia's "Slavic Brotherhood Ideology" is still going on.

#### 6. Ukraine's new language law rights historic wrongs.

01.05.2019. For centuries the Ukrainian language was relegated to the status of a "peasant language" by the foreign rulers of the lands that make up the country today and by foreign scholars in Europe and abroad who perpetuated this Russian imperial falsehood. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))

#### 7. Moldova calls for consolidated position on withdrawal of Russian troops from Transnistria.

04.05.2019. Moldova's leadership so far has no consolidated position on the issue of the withdrawal of Russian troops from the non-recognized republic of Transnistria ([TASS](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 8. What Putin could lose in Ukraine.

29.04.2019. The Russian president has not called the Russian-speaking comedian to congratulate him on his victory. There has been near silence from the Kremlin except a terse statement "recognizing" the election, while criticizing Ukraine for not allowing the 3.5 million Ukrainians living in Russia to vote. ([POLITICO](#))

#### 9. Military and defense plans of the 'Zelensky Team': Old wine in new bottles?.

01.05.2019. The ongoing confrontation between Ukraine and Russia puts heavy pressure on incoming President-Elect Volodymyr Zelensky to take new steps to readjust Ukrainian military capabilities. ([THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION](#))

#### 10. Ukraine's economic losses due to Russian occupation of Donbas.

03.05.2019. From the beginning of the Russian occupation of the Donbas, Ukraine lost a significant net share of its industry. In 2013, the regional enterprises generated nearly 16% of the national GDP, or 240 billion UAH a year (\$28.6 billion). ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

**KEY DATES**

October 2019 - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Joint letter of President Tusk and President Juncker to Volodymyr Zelensky, President-elect of Ukraine.**

22.04.2019. Significant progress has been made in the five years since Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity, and much remains to be accomplished to fully realise the peaceful, democratic and prosperous Ukraine that its citizens have called for. [\(EUROPEAN COUNCIL\)](#)

**2. Ukraine's Zelensky plans to clean up parliament and military.**

23.04.2019. Aides to Ukraine's President-elect Volodymyr Zelensky have announced anti-corruption plans, including scrapping MPs' immunity from prosecution and making military purchases transparent. [\(BBC\)](#)

**3. Zelensky team backs continued cooperation with NATO, abolishment of military draft, Ukroboronprom reform.**

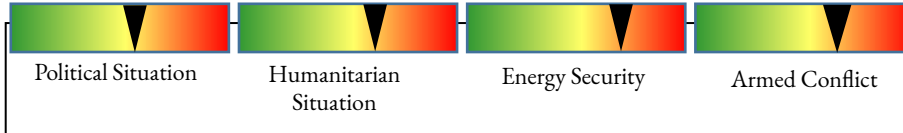
23.04.2019. The staff of Volodymyr Zelensky, the apparent winner of the presidential election in Ukraine, favors continued cooperation between Ukraine's security and defense forces and NATO, professional armed forces, and a reform of the state defense company Ukroboronprom. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**4. Five challenges for Ukraine's new president.**

24.04.2019. Ukraine has entered uncharted political waters by choosing Volodymyr Zelenskiy, a comedian with no previous political experience and few detailed policies, as its new president. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**5. EU slams Russia citizenship move as new attack on Ukraine.**

25.04.2019. The European Union hit out Thursday against Russia's move to fast-track citizenship applications from people living in conflict areas in eastern Ukraine, slamming it as an attack on Ukraine's sovereignty that would undermine an already-fragile peace agreement. [\(THE WASHINGTON POST\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- A decree signed by Putin on Wednesday has grabbed attention of international community. This decision makes it easier for Ukrainian citizens residing in non-government controlled areas of eastern Ukraine to get Russian passports. Considering Russian pattern, this attempt is apparently a typical Russian behaviour targeting Ukraine's security, sovereignty and territorial integrity especially in the first days of post-election period which is fragile and sensitive. It is understood that in spite of international reactions, Russia continues to take firm steps forward in order to reach fruition of its strategy in eastern Ukraine.
- Favoring continued cooperation between Ukraine's security and defense forces and NATO, the president-elect Zelensky seems to maintain strengthening the connections with NATO. Highlighting professional armed forces and reform of the state defense company Ukroboronprom, Zelensky team is likely to use military power as an argument while seeking a political solution in eastern Ukraine and Crimea.

**6. France, Germany, UK at UN condemn simplifying procedure for ORDLO residents to receive Russian citizenship.**

26.04.2019. France, Germany and Great Britain have condemned the decision of the President of Russia on the simplified procedure for granting of Russian citizenship to Ukrainians in Russia-occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (ORDLO). [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**7. Russia may offer fast-track citizenship scheme to all Ukrainians – Putin.**

28.04.2019. Moscow may soon extend its fast-track naturalization procedure to all citizens of Ukraine, Putin announced days after residents of the country's east were allowed to get Russian passports within three months. [\(RT\)](#)

**8. Zelensky is ready to discuss new conditions for Ukraine and Russia's coexistence.**

28.04.2019. "I would like to note once again that I am ready for negotiations. I hope that at the next meeting in the Normandy format Russia will demonstrate readiness for de-escalation ... Our side is ready to discuss new conditions for coexistence of Ukraine and Russia," Zelensky wrote. [\(TASS\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**9. Why a comedian won Ukraine's Presidency in a landslide**

24.04.2019. A comedian outsider whose campaign served as an echo chamber for public discontent in Europe's most consistently corrupt nation has won a landslide victory in the presidential race. Ukraine's new president-elect, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, is in many ways the ideal poster boy for the antiestablishment trend currently sweeping world politics. [\(FOREIGN AFFAIRS\)](#)

**10. It's time to rethink Russia's Foreign Policy Strategy.**

25.04.2019. A broad public discussion on Moscow's foreign policy goals and objectives is long overdue. International issues are affecting the interests of Russian society as a whole more and more. [\(CARNEGIE\)](#)

**11. Why Poroshenko lost.**

27.04.2019. The incumbent president didn't manage to bridge the gap with his opponent after the first round of elections on 31 March. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)



**KEY DATES**

**October 2019** - Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Five key things to know about Ukraine’s presidential election.**

15.04.2019. Ukraine pulled off the March 31 election with no major hitch. Voting and ballot-counting proceeded smoothly. The Central Election Commission’s vote tallies corresponded with exit poll results and a non-governmental parallel count. ([BROOKINGS](#))

**2. The Ukrainian elite is preparing for Poroshenko’s election defeat.**

15.04.2019. With polls showing incumbent Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko heading for a major defeat in the runoff election, governors and ministers are looking for contacts with the likely winner and his team. The president has fired a series of governors to send a warning to the rest. But the message is too late and not convincing. ([CARNEGIE](#))

**3. Ukraine investigates presidential front-runner Zelenskiy’s alleged Russian financing.**

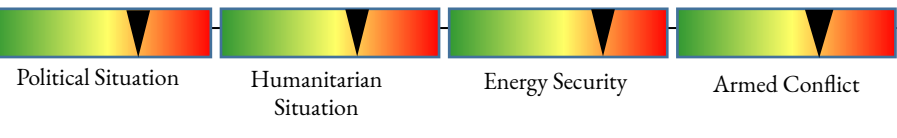
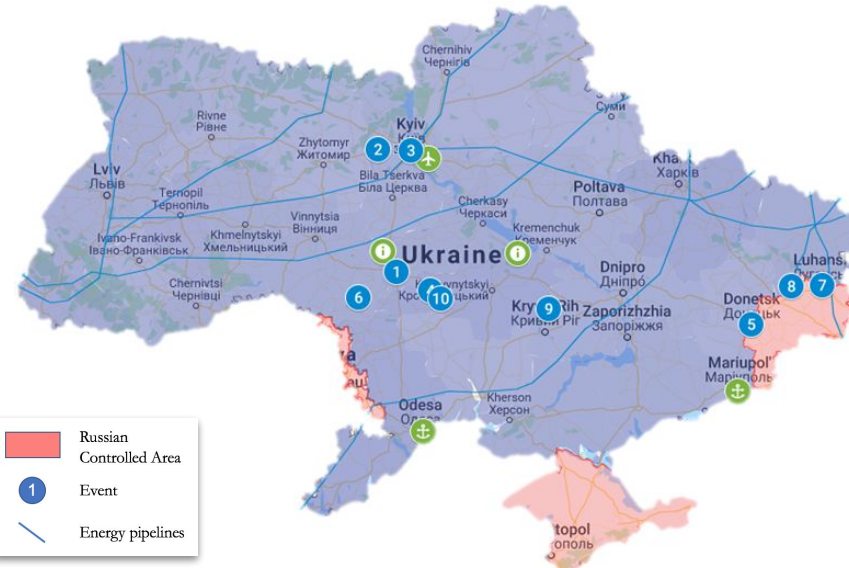
17.04.2019. Ukraine’s Security Service (SBU) is reportedly investigating allegations that presidential front-runner Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s campaign could be financed by Kremlin-linked figures. ([THE MOSCOW TIMES](#))

**4. Merkel, Macron plan meeting with Putin after Ukraine’s presidential election.**

17.04.2019. With challenger Volodymyr Zelensky far ahead in the opinion polls, both Berlin and Paris are already planning for a post-Poroshenko Ukraine. Moreover, Macron received Zelensky in Paris, also on April 12, separately from Poroshenko. ([THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION](#))

**5. Contact Group fails to reach agreement on Donbass ceasefire – Russia’s envoy.**

19.04.2019. Participants in the meeting of the Contact Group on peaceful settlement in Donbass have failed to agree on a comprehensive and stable ceasefire, according to Russia’s envoy Boris Gryzlov. ([RT](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- Although Zelensky has not offered an exhaustive guide for how he would govern, he won the second round of presidential elections against the incumbent president Poroshenko with more than 70% of the vote. It can be deduced from his campaign that he would focus on and follow a populist and anti-corruption path which completely reflects the demands and expectation of millions of Ukrainians suffering from poverty and corruption.
- As “Sluha Narodu” (his show in TV meaning “Servant of the People”), he would most probably receive critics on lack of political experience, ability to deal with “old hand” Putin and his commitment to a pro-Western course.
- While his presidency offers opportunities - especially for domestic issues - such as fight against corruption, it also presents risks as slowdown of the reform progress and integration with the West. Additionally, Putin will likely attempt to exploit Zelenskiy’s lack of foreign policy experience to make political gains in Ukraine.

**6. Leading in polls, political novice tells Ukrainian President ‘I’m the result of your mistakes’.**

19.04.2019. Facing incumbent President Petro Poroshenko in a final raucous debate Friday at the 70,000-capacity Olimpiyskiy Stadium in Kyiv, comedian and leading presidential candidate Volodymyr Zelenskiy described himself as the product of Ukraine’s corrupted political system. ([VOA](#))

**7. Putin replaced overseer of Donbas, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.**

19.04.2019. Russian President Vladimir Putin replaced the head of the presidential directorate, supervisor of the DPR, LPR as well as Georgian breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. ([UAWIRE](#))

**OPINIONS**

**8. Hybrid War in Ukraine – predictions for 2019 and beyond.**

18.04.2019. In the aftermath of the first round of the presidential election in Ukraine, that question has become more relevant than ever. Additionally, it triggers the need for new predictions for 2019 and beyond. ([EUROMAIDAN](#))

**9. A Shadow over Ukraine’s Presidential Election.**

19.04.2019. With Ukraine’s establishment forecasting doom after the presidential runoff, the far right’s influence on politics is impossible to ignore. Its resurgence is both a symptom and a cause of the country’s ills: there is less daylight between it and the political mainstream than either admits. ([ICG](#))

**10. Putin’s Wars in Eastern Europe: Post-Crimean Reality.**

21.04.2019. After occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula and invasion of Donbas, Russia has entered a new level of hybrid aggression, the object of which is not only Ukraine. Under special danger, there were new independent countries that arose after the collapse of the USSR, because Russia continues to regard them as a sphere of influence. ([UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS](#))

**11. Ukraine’s New President: The Stakes for Ukraine and the West.**

21.04.2019. His presidency presents at least six key risks for Ukraine and the West. ([ISW](#))

**KEY DATES**

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. 'Rapid reaction': Russia's ships, missile systems 'on duty' as NATO holds exercise in Black Sea.**

09.04.2019. The Russian Black Sea Fleet's reconnaissance and attack ships and coastal missile systems have been put "on duty" in connection with NATO's exercise in the Black Sea ([RT](#))

**2. Rebel leader says East Ukraine wants to join Russia.**

09.04.2019. The head of one of eastern Ukraine's breakaway regions has said his separatist-held republic wants to join Russia as a full-fledged member. ([THE MOSCOW TIMES](#))

**3. Poroshenko: We now have a missile with a radius of destruction of more than one kilometer.**

09.04.2019. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that Ukraine now has a high-precision missile with a radius of destruction of more than 1 kilometer. ([INTERFAX](#))

**4. Putin's Administration comments on possible talks with Zelensky.**

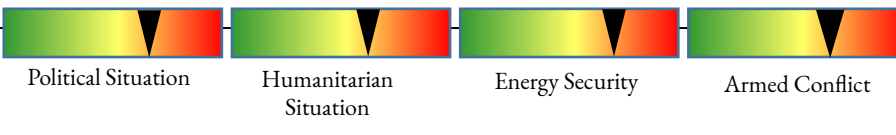
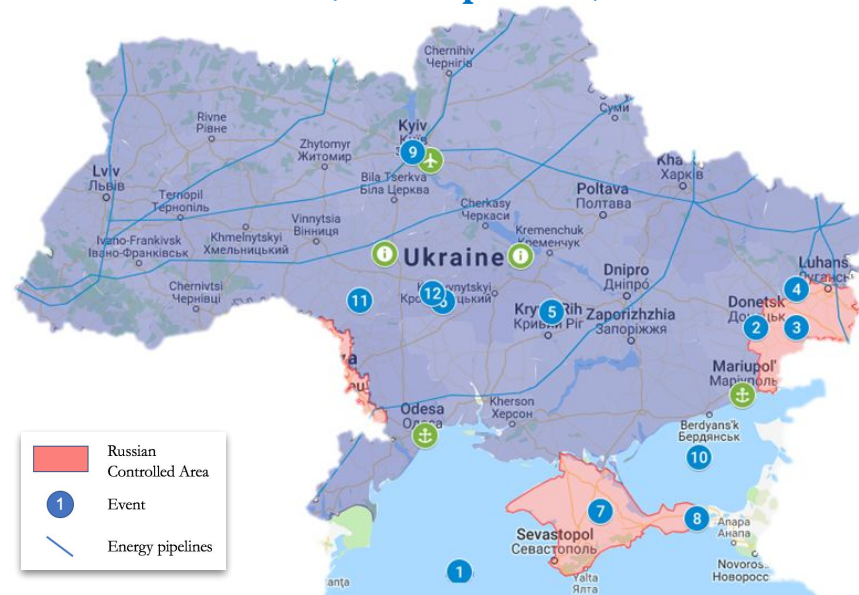
10.04.2019. President of Russia Vladimir Putin is open for a dialogue about the issues on the agenda, but "Moscow is not a participant of Donbas conflict," as Press-Secretary of Russia's President Dmitry Peskov said ([112 UA](#))

**5. Russia thwarts meeting of humanitarian, economic subgroups of TCG, refuses to work in trilateral format.**

10.04.2019. Representatives of the Russian Federation in the humanitarian and economic subgroups of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) to resolve the situation in Donbas have thwarted the meetings that began in Minsk, First Deputy Chairperson of Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada and Kyiv's representative in the humanitarian subgroup of the Trilateral Contact Group ([INTERFAX](#))

**6. Russia preparing for full-scale war in Europe, Ukraine will be first bridgehead.**

11.04.2019. Russia has been preparing for a full-scale war in Europe and Ukraine will be the first bridgehead, Secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) Oleksandr Turchynov has said. ([INTERFAX](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- *In the eve of 2nd round of presidential elections, the electoral rhetoric is becoming increasingly divisive and more extreme in Ukraine, which might trigger real violence in the streets in the coming week unless the escalation is kept under control. Moreover, it could provide ground for Russia to exploit the current situation in Ukraine.*
- *Zelensky seems to be the frontrunner to become Ukraine's next president, while it is still unknown how his fail to appear on the podium against Poroshenko would affect his public support. After a brief overview to Zelensky's thoughts on the most urgent issue of Ukraine, thinking to invite the U.S. and Britain to join peace negotiations is worth considering. Given Zelensky's views and Russia's side perspective as being 'a supporter of dialogue', results of the elections might bring new impetus to the peace talks.*

**7. Ukrainian President Poroshenko reveals plan to take back Donbas and Crimea.**

11.04.2019. In an on-air interview with Novoye Vremya (New Time) radio station, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko said that, if reelected, he plans to win back Crimea and the Donbas using the Minsk agreements. ([UAWIRE](#))

**8. Russia threatens Kyiv with war if Ukrainian ships attempt to pass through the Kerch Strait.**

11.04.2019. In a statement released by the Federation Council, Moscow threatened to take military action against Kyiv for violating procedures for the passage of Ukrainian Navy ships through the Kerch Strait ([UAWIRE](#))

**9. Sharpened rhetoric increases ahead of second round of Ukrainian Presidential Elections.**

11.04.2019. As Ukrainians prepare to vote for a president in the runoff scheduled for April 21, electoral rhetoric is becoming increasingly divisive and, in some cases, more extreme. ([JAMESTOWN](#))

**10. Nord Stream 2 delay "trump card" in Russia-Ukraine gas talks.**

12.04.2019. Russia wants to "hurt Ukraine," and have "a special relationship" with Germany, according to a U.S. energy official ([UNIAN](#))

**11. Canadian MP calls on NATO to send more subs to Black Sea.**

12.04.2019. Earlier, NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg announced that member states have negotiated measures aimed at supporting Ukraine and Georgia in the Black Sea using the pretext of an incident in the Kerch Strait, where Ukrainian military ships were stopped by Russia's Coast Guard upon entering closed Russian territorial waters. ([SPUTNIK](#))

**12. Policies of Ukraine's presidential frontrunner Zelenskiy.**

12.04.2019. Volodymyr Zelenskiy, a 41-year-old comedian with no prior political experience, is the frontrunner to become Ukraine's next president. ([REUTERS](#))

**13. Council of Europe may pass resolution on PACE reform on May 17.**

13.04.2019. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe could pass a resolution, which will draft attitudes to the reforming of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and will become a step for the Russian delegation's return to that organization, Konstantin Kosachev, chair of the Russian Federation Council foreign affairs committee ([TASS](#))

**14. Poroshenko debates empty podium as Zelensky stays away.**

13.04.2019. Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko has debated with an empty podium after his rival Volodymyr Zelensky - a TV star and comedian- failed to appear. ([BBC](#))



**KEY DATES**

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Comedian takes commanding lead in Ukraine presidential vote.**

01.04.2019. A comedian with no political experience took a commanding lead in the first round of Ukraine’s presidential election, offering a fresh face to voters fed up with corruption in a country on the front line of the West’s standoff with Russia. [\(REUTERS\)](#)

**2. NATO to guarantee safe passage for Ukrainian ships through Kerch Strait.**

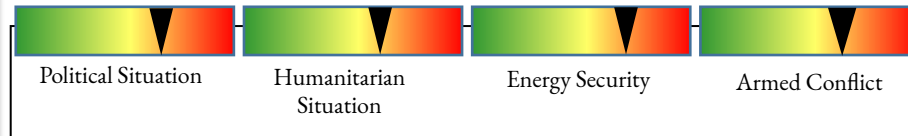
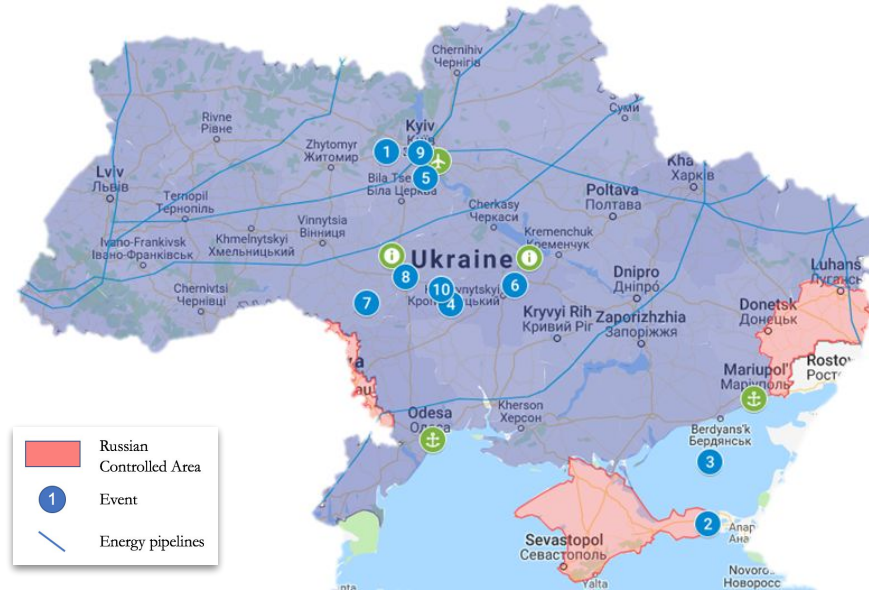
03.04.2019. The North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) plans to take steps to ensure that Ukrainian ships have safe passage through the Kerch Strait. [\(UAWIRE\)](#)

**3. Kremlin dismisses NATO plans for Ukrainian ships’ passage through Kerch Strait.**

03.04.2019. Moscow has responded to NATO’s statements on its intention to guarantee the passage of Ukrainian vessels through the Kerch Strait made by US Ambassador to NATO Kay Bailey Hutchison in a negative way. [\(TASS\)](#)

**4. Russia cannot decide whether Ukraine and Georgia can join NATO - Stoltenberg.**

05.04.2019. Just the idea that the aspirations of Ukraine, Georgia or any other country to join NATO “provokes” Russia to greater aggression is wrong and dangerous as it is not up to Moscow to decide who can and should get membership of the Alliance. [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Considering experience in politics, Volodymyr Zelensky seems to make international community surprised and has run circles around the incumbent president with the results of presidential elections first round. Apart from the ongoing conflict with Russia in the eastern part of the country, according to official figures, Ukrainians seem to be more interested in issues such as expensiveness and health care than nationalism and language. It is as clear as crystal that the arguments Porosbenko has used and seems to use in the election campaign does not satisfy Ukrainians expectations.*
- *NATO’s plan to provide Ukrainian ships a safe passage through the Kerch Strait is reasonable and necessary. In this regard Russia is likely to pull the strings when it comes to NATO ships presence in Black Sea and Sea of Azov. Russia will highly likely ask for stricter implementation of Montreux Convention, which restricts the passage of naval ships not belonging to Black Sea states.*

**5. Petro Poroshenko’s last-minute nationalist makeover.**

05.04.2019. Ukraine’s president is making a desperate gambit to win re-election—and to remain politically relevant if he loses. [\(FOREIGN POLICY\)](#)

**6. Russia defeats Ukraine in WTO dispute over transit ban.**

06.04.2019. The World Trade Organization, or WTO, has ruled that Russia’s ban on the transit of Ukrainian goods through its territory to Central Asia is justified on national security grounds, according to the April 5 ruling. [\(KYIV POST\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**7. Comedian to face incumbent President in run-off and other takeaways of Ukrainian elections.**

02.04.2019. The results of the 11 top-scoring candidates out of the 39 running in the first round of the 2019 Ukrainian presidential elections. The voting share of the other candidates ranges 0,01 to 0,57%. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**8. Election in Ukraine: Don’t expect warming in relations with Russia.**

04.04.2019. From the presidential election in Ukraine, one should not expect a significant warming in Russian-Ukrainian relations. [\(VALDAI\)](#)

**9. Ukraine elections enter a second round. What to expect.**

04.04.2019. The period until the runoff on April 21 will be a time of behind-the-scenes negotiations. [\(THE MOSCOW TIMES\)](#)

**10. Ukraine and the Association Agreement: Implementation Monitoring 2014–2018.**

05.04.2019. The Ukrainian Centre for European Policy presented expert monitoring of the implementation of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement in 2014-2018. [\(UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS\)](#)

**KEY DATES**

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Russia wants to continue gas transit through Ukraine – energy ministry.**

25.03.2019. Moscow wants to sign a new gas transit deal with Ukraine after 2019, when the current contract with the country expires, Russia’s deputy energy minister has said. [\(RT\)](#)

**2. Two NATO warships set to arrive in Ukraine’s Odesa April 1.**

27.03.2019. "The Royal Canadian Navy’s HMCS Toronto and the Spanish Navy’s Santa Maria frigate will arrive in Odesa after patrolling the Black Sea along with other ships of the Standing NATO Maritime Group Two for several days," the report reads. [\(UNIAN\)](#)

**3. Pompeo announces joint action with NATO against Russian aggression in Ukraine.**

28.03.2019. U.S. State Secretary Mike Pompeo announced joint additional measures against Russia for its aggression against Ukraine with NATO [\(112.UA\)](#)

**4. In presidential vote, Ukraine looks east.**

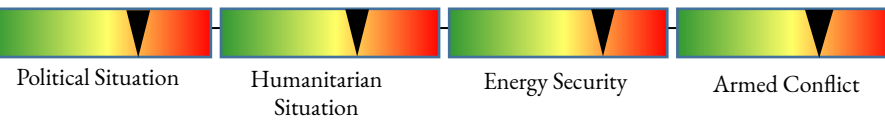
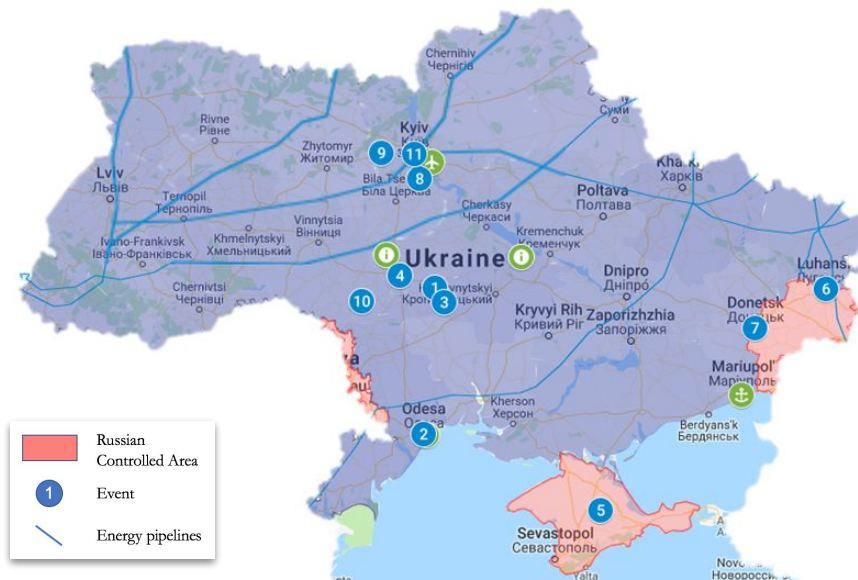
28.03.2019. Since Ukraine’s independence from the Soviet Union, political power in the country has always shifted between the Ukrainian-speaking, western part of the country and the Russian-speaking east. [\(POLITICO\)](#)

**5. Poroshenko not ready to compromise on Crimea and Donbas.**

28.03.2019. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko is not ready to make compromises in the negotiations on peace. His stance is unwavering: Crimea and Donbas are Ukraine! [\(UKRINFORM\)](#)

**6. Ukraine develops electromagnetic weapon.**

29.03.2019. The Ukrainian state enterprise Spetsstechnoexport, which is a subsidiary of the state defense concern Ukroboronprom, announced that Ukraine has developed and begun production of an electromagnetic weapon designed to destroy various types of military radio-electronic devices, including power supplies and data transmission systems. [\(UAWIRE\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- For Ukraine’s presidential elections, early results indicate that Zelenskiy, a comedian with no political experience, leads the first round while the incumbent president Poroshenko is in a distant second place. Both will compete in the second round on 21 April.
- Ukraine’s presidential election may mean a lot. But the most important thing seems to be the winner of this race would not be a pro-Russian candidate. After five years since its democratic revolution, despite Russia’s war against Ukraine, Ukraine is solidifying its path toward Euro-Atlantic integration.
- The be-all and end-all of the hard period after speech of acceptance are Crimea, Donbas and corruption. A new and stronger concept needs to be fulfilled to be up to these pending issues.

**7. Alexander Hug: ‘The longer Ukraine’s war goes on the more difficult it will be to unwind’.**

30.03.2019. Alexander Hug (The former face of OSCE’s Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine) says he never expected the Ukrainian conflict would develop into a prolonged war. [\(INDEPENDENT\)](#)

**8. Russia invites Ukrainian Foreign Minister Klimkin to CIS Foreign Ministers Council in Moscow.**

30.03.2019. Russia’s permanent representative for the statutory and other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) bodies, Andrey Grozov, announced that the Russian Federation has officially invited Ukraine to participate in the meeting of the CIS Foreign Ministers Council in Moscow, which will take place on April 5 [\(UAWIRE\)](#)

**9. Ukraine presidential election 2019: Polls, candidates and issues as Zelenskiy, Tymoshenko and Poroshenko face off.**

30.03.2019. There are currently 38 candidates running for president in Ukraine, but only three have a solid chance to win. Two are political veterans, one of whom is the incumbent President and candy tycoon Petro Poroshenko. One is a newcomer, a comedian named Volodymyr Zelenskiy who has only played a president on television. The 41-year-old Zelenskiy is currently leading in the polls. [\(NEWSWEEK\)](#)

**10. Ukraine election: Comedian leads presidential contest.**

01.04.2019. A comedian with no political experience has won the most votes in the first round of Ukraine’s presidential elections, early results indicate. With half the ballots counted, Volodymyr Zelenskiy - who plays the president on TV - got about 30%, with current leader Petro Poroshenko on 16%. The two - who have expressed largely pro-EU opinions - are set to take part in a run-off election next month. [\(BBC\)](#) [\(CVK\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**11. Want to know what’s next in Russian election interference? Pay attention to Ukraine’s elections.**

28.03.2019. No one knows who will come out on top among the 39 candidates running for president in this Sunday’s election in Ukraine, but one thing is nearly certain: The winner won’t be a pro-Russian candidate. As Ukraine marks five years since its democratic revolution, Russia’s war against Ukraine has solidified the country’s path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. Despite differences on domestic policies, the top contenders all support Ukraine’s eventual membership in NATO and the EU. [\(BROOKINGS\)](#)

**12. Ukraine, America and the "Island of Russia".**

29.03.2019. The confrontation between Russia and the United States on a wide range of issues is one of the realities of the modern world. The two countries proceed from fundamentally different visions of the world order and are divided on the issues of nuclear, information, energy and regional security. [\(VALDAI\)](#)



**KEY DATES**

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Western sanctions v Eastern promises: Russia's Crimea could become part of China's new Silk Road.**

18.03.2019. There are also plans to renew cooperation between Crimea and southern China's Hainan province, as well as between such cities as Yalta and Sanya, Sevastopol and Dalian, Sudak and Heihe. [\(RT\)](#)

**2. Artillery Wars in Donbas enter a new stage.**

18.03.2019. The Ukrainian war is evolving. What began as an invasion of small groups of Russian special forces, later turned into repeated clashes at checkpoints, and eventually became an almost full-scale war involving heavy artillery, tanks, tactical missiles and the air force. [\(THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION\)](#)

**3. Putin invites Erdogan to opening of Central Mosque in Crimea.**

18.03.2019. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he has arrived Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to the opening of the Central Mosque in Crimea. [\(TASS\)](#)

**4. Klimkin: 'Minsk' is not dead, but in a coma because of Russia.**

19.03.2019. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has said the Minsk agreements on resolving the situation in the east of Ukraine are in a "coma," which only Russia can end. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**5. Russian Gazprom notifies countries on suspension of gas transit through Ukraine since 2020.**

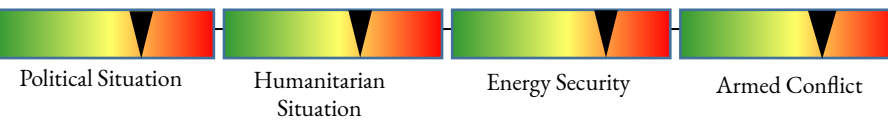
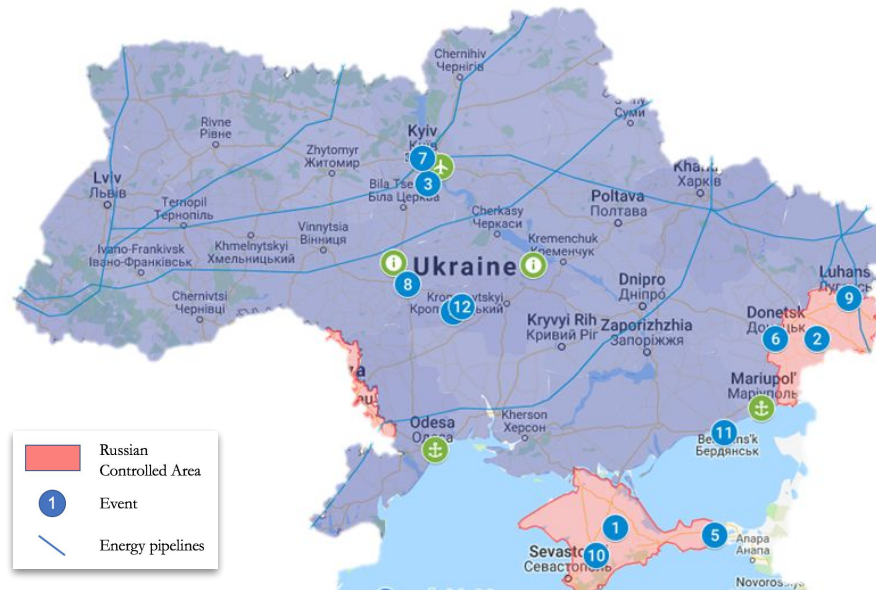
20.03.2019. Russian Gazprom began to officially notify the countries on the suspension of gas transit through Ukraine. [\(112 UA\)](#)

**6. Ukraine imposes sanctions on Russians over Kerch Bridge, seizure of Naval Vessels.**

20.03.2019. Ukraine has imposed sanctions on hundreds of individuals and entities for their alleged roles in the conflict between Ukraine and Russia over the Crimea region and the war in eastern Ukraine. [\(RFE/RL\)](#)

**7. Ukrainian presidential elections front-runner Zelensky would consider negotiating with Moscow over Donbas.**

22.03.2019. Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian actor who is one of the leading candidates in the presidential election, would be willing to negotiate with Moscow in order to obtain a ceasefire in the Donbas. [\(UAWIRE\)](#)



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Making investment in Crimea on all occasion, Russia is trying to consolidate the so-called idea of "Crimea belongs to Russia and Russia is in the driving seat at all cost". Russia and her proponents see Crimea as "fait accompli". But due to ongoing conflict, trouble in Donbas should be more particularly addressed.*
- *It is obviously seen that Russia is still involved in Donbas as a matter of negotiation with the Euro-Atlantic community and thus to achieve further gains. The possibility of freezing "Donbas issue" -in case no suitable solution is reached- should not be an agenda item on the table. Although EU is tackling with serious domestic issues, it does not have luxury for letting "Donbas trouble" go on as it is. If so, it seems that history in which Russia is the spotlight repeats once more.*
- *Putin's efforts for the recognition of Crimea as a Russian soil on the international arena reaches now to Turkey, by inviting the Turkish president to an opening of a mosque in Crimea. He will likely go on such efforts for implicit recognition of Crimea as a part of Russia.*

**8. G7 Letter takes aim at role of Violent Extremists in Ukrainian Society, Election.**

22.03.2019. As the Ukrainian presidential election nears, the world's leading industrialized nations have some strong words for Ukraine's top cop amid recent far-right violence in Kyiv and other cities. [\(RFE/RL\)](#)

**9. Poroshenko on Medvedchuk-Boiko visit to Moscow: They discussing unification against Ukraine.**

23.03.2019. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko condemns the visit of presidential candidate Yuriy Boiko and leader of the movement Ukrainian Choice - The Right of the People, member of the For Life Party Viktor Medvedchuk to Russia and negotiations with leaders of the government and Gazprom. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**10. By joining NATO, Ukraine will reduce defense spending, increase security level, end Donbas conflict – Poroshenko.**

23.03.2019. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has said that by joining NATO, the country could potentially reduce spending on the defense and security sector from the current 6% of GDP to 2% of GDP envisaged for members of the Alliance. [\(INTERFAX\)](#)

**OPINIONS**

**11. 5 years after Crimea's illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution.**

20.03.2019. March 18 marks the fifth anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, which capped the most blatant land grab in Europe since World War II. While the simmering conflict in Donbas now dominates the headlines, it is possible to see a path to resolution there. [\(BROOKINGS\)](#)

**12. The Stillborn Western Naval Convoy to the Sea of Azov: Lessons Learned.**

20.03.2019. On November 29, Poroshenko declared, "Germany is one of our [Ukraine's] closest allies and we hope that NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] countries are now ready to place warships in the Azov Sea to help Ukraine and provide security" [\(THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION\)](#)

**13. Pollsters say Zelenskyi leads in Ukraine's presidential race. Bookies lean towards Poroshenko.**

22.03.2019. Latest surveys call comedian Volodymyr Zelenskyi the favorite. However, according to the odds, incumbent President Petro Poroshenko is the most likely person to win. [\(EUROMAIDAN PRESS\)](#)

**KEY DATES**

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine's Cabinet preparing sanctions against foreign observers of Russian presidential election in Crimea.**

11.03.2019. Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers has approved and submitted to the National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) the proposals to impose individual sanctions on foreign observers who monitored last year's Russian presidential election in Russia-occupied Crimea. ([INTERFAX](#))

**2. Peacekeeping mission in eastern Ukraine must help fulfillment of Minsk agreements – OSCE General Secretary.**

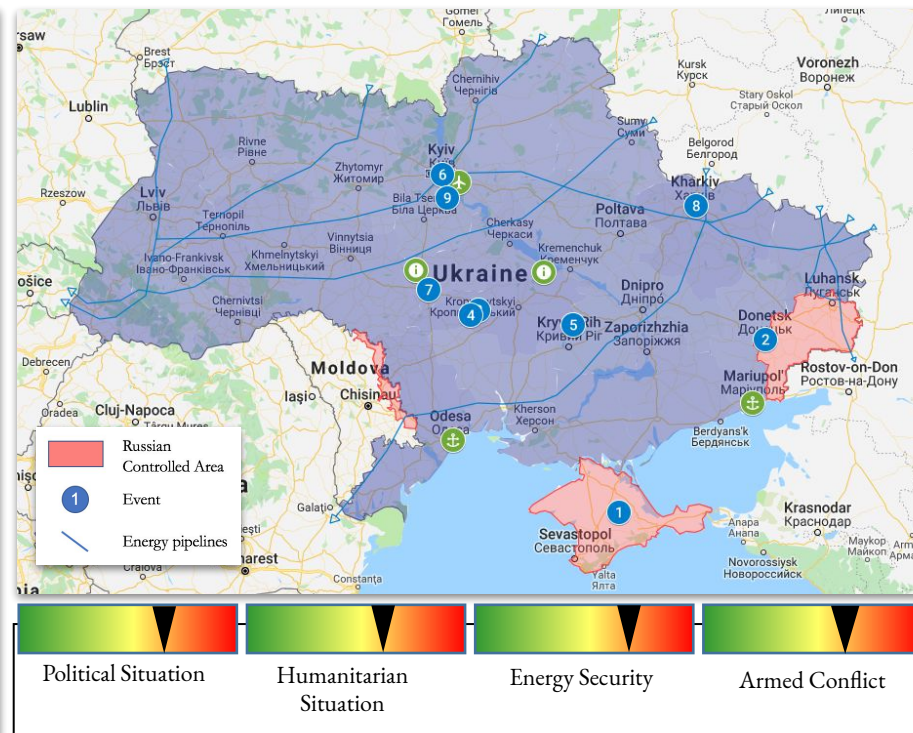
11.03.2019. OSCE General Secretary Thomas Greminger has supported the idea of sending a United Nations peacekeeping mission to eastern Ukraine. He believes its mission is to fulfill the Minsk agreements. ([INTERFAX](#))

**3. Ukraine not bound by any restrictions after Russia's withdrawal from INF Treaty.**

11.03.2019. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said Ukraine is not bound by any restrictions regarding the missile range after Russia's withdrawal from the INF Treaty. ([UNIAN](#))

**4. Why the West should be worried about Ukraine's flagging fight against graft.**

12.03.2019. The last week of February was a great one for corrupt officials in Ukraine. They finally got off scot-free. Ukraine's Constitutional Court (CCU) eliminated criminal liability for illicit enrichment. This decision is a major step back in Ukraine's struggle to fight high-level corruption. ([ATLANTIC COUNCIL](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Voting overwhelmingly, the European Parliament has approved a report underlining that Russia can no longer be considered a “strategic partner” and that the EU cannot envisage a gradual return to “business as usual” until Russia fulfils the obligations related to the Minsk Agreement. Considering possible impacts of Russia on some EU countries, it is clear to determine that EU had better weigh before implementing stricter policies against Russia.*
- *With the intention and aim to punish Russia for the illegal annexation of Crimea and continued involvement in separatist uprising in eastern Ukraine, US, EU and several Western Countries imposed sanctions starting early 2014. Economic indicators are one of the main actors to have a voice in the impacts of these sanctions. If not manipulated, it is likely to deduce from these indicators that they have spurred economic development and patriotism in Putin's Russia.*
- *Considering OSCE's selection of Russian observers for the elections and Ukraine's recent law on prohibiting Russian observers on Ukrainian soil, Russia will likely push for disrupting Ukraine's respective law and exploit it as an opportunity to discredit Ukraine on the international level.*

**5. No more 'business as usual,' Russia not a strategic partner, European Parliament declares.**

12.03.2019. The European Parliament has overwhelmingly voted to approve a report stating that Russia “can no longer be considered a ‘strategic partner’” and that “the EU cannot envisage a gradual return to ‘business as usual’ until Russia fully implements the Minsk Agreement and restores the territorial integrity of Ukraine.” ([RFE/RL](#))

**6. NATO-Ukraine Commission discuss situation in Crimea.**

13.03.2019. The Political Director of Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Oleksiy Makeiev, and a representative of the Crimean Tatar community, Eskender Bariiev, briefed Allies on the security environment and human rights violations. ([UKRAINE DEFENCE JOURNAL](#))

**7. OSCE human rights body selects 24 Russian observers for Ukrainian election.**

15.03.2019. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) has selected 24 Russian representatives for the Ukrainian election observation mission. ([RT](#))

**8. Ukraine resumes construction of the wall on the border with Russia.**

16.03.2019. An assistant to Head of State Border Service of Ukraine Oleh Slobodyan stated that on March 1, Ukraine resumed construction of the so-called “Wall” on the Russian-Ukrainian border. ([UAWIRE](#))

**OPINIONS**

**9. Russia is winning the sanctions game.**

14.03.2019. These sanctions were supposed to punish Moscow's elite, but instead they've spurred economic development and patriotism. ([THE NATIONAL INTEREST](#))

**10. Presidential Elections In Ukraine [What Think Tanks Are Thinking]**

15.03.2019. This note offers links to recent commentaries, studies and reports from major international think tanks on the situation in Ukraine. ([EP THINK-TANK](#))



### KEY DATES

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Kyiv bans foreign military basing on Ukrainian territory.

04.03.2019. The Ukrainian parliament adopted several symbolic amendments to the Constitution, on February 7. The amendments, which President Petro Poroshenko signed into law on February 19, aim to make Ukraine's strategic course toward NATO and the European Union irreversible. One of the amendments is repealing Paragraph 14 Section XV, which is at first glance seems **not to allow foreign allied forces on Ukrainian soil (including Crimea)** for extended periods of time. But it seems that Articles 85 and 92 provide sufficient legal justification for permitting the presence of foreign formations in Ukraine. ([112 UA](#))

#### 2. Misappropriation of Ukrainian state funds: Council prolongs EU sanctions for one year.

04.03.2019. The Council extended until 6 March 2020 the asset freezes directed against 12 persons identified as responsible for the misappropriation of Ukrainian state funds or for the abuse of office causing a loss to Ukrainian public funds. ([EUROPEAN COUNCIL](#))

#### 3. NATO chief wants to beef up Ukraine defenses against Russia threat.

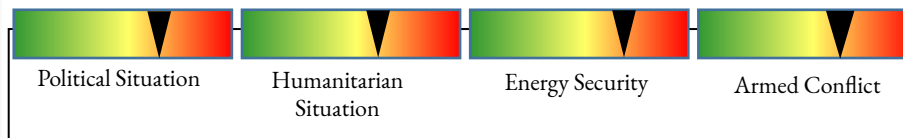
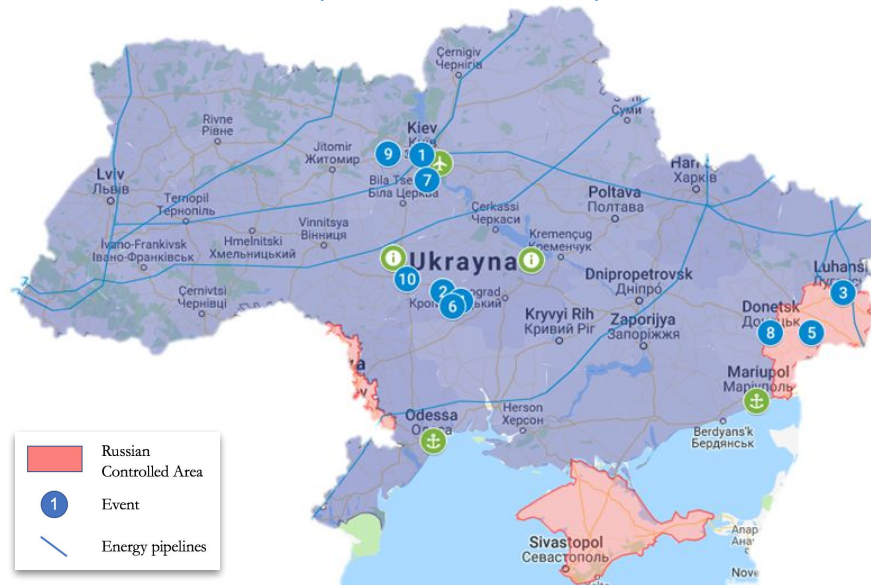
05.03.2019. The commander of NATO forces in Europe, US General Curtis Scaparrotti, said Tuesday he wants to bolster Ukraine's defenses against Russia's "increasingly aggressive" posture in the east of the country and the Black Sea. ([DAILY MAIL](#))

#### 4. Russian-German Gas Pipeline, U.S. Threats.

05.03.2019. It seems that the United States will be unable to hinder the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline project. ([WARSAW INSTITUTE](#))

#### 5. Russia puts on hold "humanitarian aid" to Donbas.

05.03.2019. The Russian Federation suspended the deployment of "humanitarian convoys" to the occupied Donbas. ([UNIAN](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- As **presidential elections** on 31 March approach,
  - the votes seem to be divided between the candidates according to the polls and it is still unclear who will govern the country,
  - the conflict resolution strategies will most probably be the decisive factor for the voters, which differ among the leading candidates,
  - the election campaigns get increasingly controversial by warnings of Russian interference and allegations of fraud,
  - we assess that these will likely bring potential disputes over the results.
- In this respect, the EU and OSCE should pay more attention to the Ukrainian politics including especially possible Russian interference to the elections and the whole range of possible outcomes of the upcoming elections.
- It is assessed that the efforts to reveal Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and to prevent Russia's continuing revanchist aggression would not be easy and have some possible effects "upsetting the balance".

#### 6. Poroshenko proposes including representatives from NATO member states in Ukroboronprom's supervisory board.

06.03.2019. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko proposes including representatives from NATO member states in the supervisory board of state-run Ukroboronprom Concern. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 7. NATO-Ukraine Commission discusses situation in Crimea.

06.03.2019. Allies reaffirmed NATO's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They expressed concern over human rights violations in Crimea, targeting the Crimean Tatar population, as well as other ethnic, political and religious groups. ([NATO](#))

#### 8. Poroshenko approves admission of foreign troops to Ukraine.

07.03.2019. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko signed the law "On the approval of the decision of the president of Ukraine on the admission of units of the armed forces of other states to the territory of Ukraine in 2019 for participation in multinational exercises" ([UKRINFORM](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 9. Ukraine: What comes after the Presidential Election?

07.03.2019. It is high time for Europe and the United States to pay much closer attention to Ukrainian politics and the whole range of possible outcomes of the elections ahead. ([CARNEGIE](#))

#### 10. Ukrainian Presidential Election Results Still Unpredictable

07.03.2019. According to some analysts, the main struggle for the presidency will unfold between the current president Petro Poroshenko, the head of the Batkivshchyna party Yulia Tymoshenko, and the showman Volodymyr Zelensky. ([EURASIA REVIEW](#))

#### 11. Why Ukraine's defense corruption scandal is actually a good thing?

08.03.2019. Ukraine's state concern of defense industries Ukroboronprom is rocking from a corruption scandal triggered by two videos from the Bihus.info investigative journalism project. ([EUROMAIDAN](#))

## KEY DATES

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Ukraine's Foreign Ministry wants to create international platform for de-occupation of Crimea.

27.02.2019. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine promotes the idea of creating a platform for the de-occupation of Crimea in the international arena which may become a negotiating platform for the return of the annexed peninsula to Ukraine. ([UKRINFORM](#))

### 2. Law banning Russian citizens from being observers at elections in Ukraine enters into force.

28.02.2019. The law on amendments to certain laws of Ukraine on observation at elections in Ukraine, which bans citizens of the Russian Federation from being observers during the voting process in Ukraine, has entered into force. ([INTERFAX](#))

### 3. Impeachment process begun against Ukraine's Poroshenko.

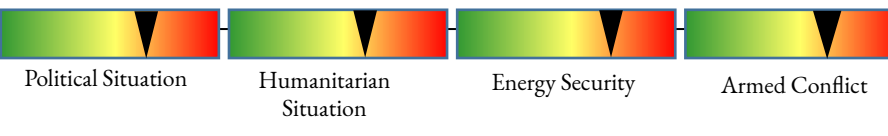
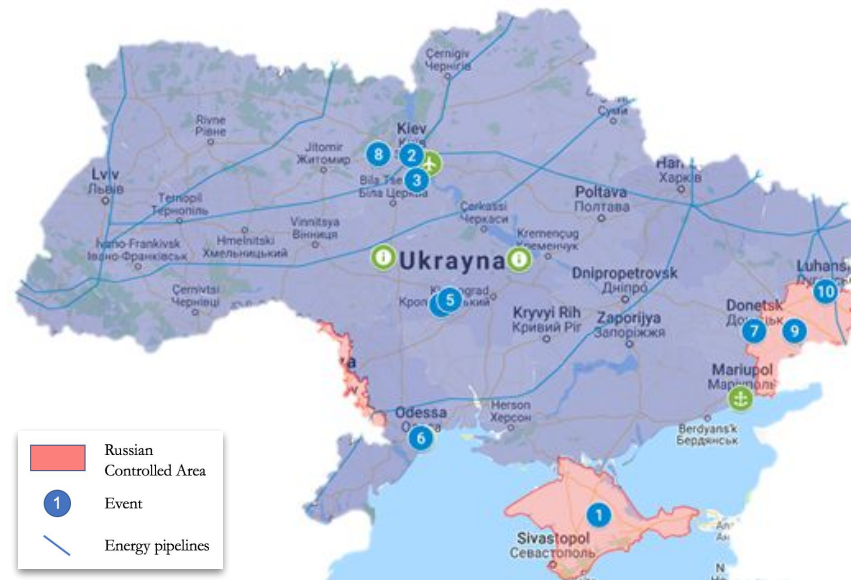
28.02.2019. Ukrainian lawmakers have launched the process to impeach President Petro Poroshenko following an eruptive media report linking him to a corruption scandal involving the President's friends who have allegedly stolen from the country's defense industry. ([OCCRP](#))

### 4. Rada wrecks army's reform plans, threatens NATO cooperation.

28.02.2019. Ukraine's parliament on Feb 26 rejected two bills vital for the military – one to introduce a new, NATO-style system of ranks, and another to make long-overdue amendments to outdated Soviet military service regulations. ([KYIV POST](#))

### 5. Russia announces plans to bypass Ukraine in gas trade, reigniting Nord Stream 2 controversy.

28.02.2019. Russian energy minister Alexander Novak's announcement that Ukraine may no longer serve as a transit country for gas exports to Western Europe has irritated German policymakers. ([CEW](#))



## ASSESSMENT

As *presidential elections* on 31 March approach,

- *the votes seem to be divided between the candidates according to the polls and it is still unclear who will govern the country,*
- *the conflict resolution strategies will most probably be the decisive factor for the voters, which differ among the leading candidates,*
- *the election campaigns get increasingly controversial by warnings of Russian interference and allegations of fraud,*
- *we assess that these will likely bring potential disputes over the results.*

### 6. Poroshenko and Volker visit US missile destroyer in Odessa.

28.02.2019. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko met with US State Department Special Representative for Ukraine Kurt Volker on board the missile cruiser USS Donald Cook (DDG 75), which had recently arrived at the Port of Odessa. ([UAWIRE](#))

### 7. Zelensky about war in Donbas: Negotiations with Russia inevitable.

01.03.2019. Presidential candidate Volodymyr Zelensky, who ranks first according to various public opinion polls, says peace negotiations with Russia are inevitable. ([UNIAN](#))

### 8. Council of Europe calls on Kyiv to ensure electoral rights of IDPs.

01.03.2019. The Ukrainian authorities must fully ensure the right of internally displaced persons from temporarily uncontrolled regions of Donbas and occupied Crimea to take part in the elections ([INTERFAX](#))

## OPINIONS

### 9. The State of the Donbass: A Study of Eastern Ukraine's Separatist-held Areas.

01.03.2019. The conflict in Donbass, which is entering its sixth year, is among Europe's biggest security challenges. This study offers a first comprehensive political, economic and societal assessment of the "People's Republics" of eastern Ukraine, on which information is scarce since they cannot be safely visited by Western analysts. ([3DCFTA](#)s)

### 10. Are the Russians coming? Russia's military buildup near Ukraine – Analysis.

02.03.2019. Russia's military buildup appears to have recently accelerated. In January 2018, Russia's Southern Military District fielded 415 tactical aircraft and 259 helicopters. A year later, those numbers climbed to over 500 tactical aircraft and 340 helicopters. ([EURASIA REVIEW](#))



**KEY DATES**

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukraine seeks more EU aid for south, east regions as elections near.**

18.02.2019. Ukraine’s foreign minister asked the European Union on Monday for hundreds of millions of euros in loans and aid for infrastructure and businesses in its troubled east and south, regions he said Russia was trying to “suffocate”. ([REUTERS](#))

**2. EU should support Ukraine due to situation in Sea of Azov.**

18.02.2019. The EU needs to provide support to Ukraine in connection with the situation in the area of the Sea of Azov, Vice President of the European Commission Federica Mogherini has stated. ([INTERFAX](#))

**3. EU Council approves Azov package of sanctions against Russia.**

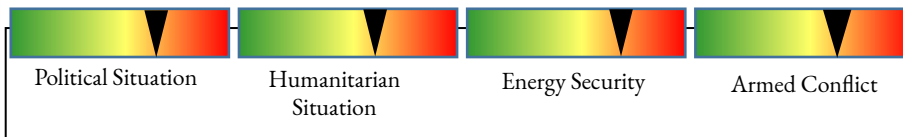
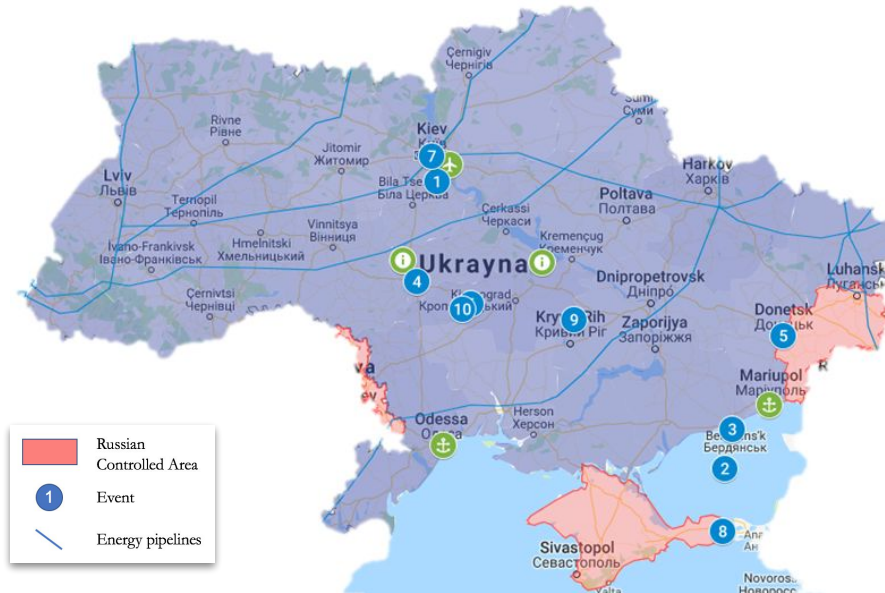
18.02.2019. The EU’s Foreign Affairs Council has approved the “Azov” package of sanctions against the Russian Federation, deputy head of the Ukrainian President’s administration Kostiantyn Yeliseyev has said. ([INTERFAX](#))

**4. Ukraine’s Poroshenko signs constitutional amendment on ‘NATO, EU membership’.**

19.02.2019. Ukraine’s President Petro Poroshenko has signed a constitutional amendment committing to join NATO and the European Union. Speaking in parliament on Tuesday, Poroshenko said he sees securing Ukraine’s membership in the EU and NATO as his “strategic mission”. ([RT](#))

**5. Ukraine’s president wants UN options for peace force in east.**

20.02.2019. A UN-mandated peacekeeping operation could be decisive in ending the conflict in Ukraine’s east with Russian-backed separatists — and Secretary-General Antonio Guterres should send an assessment mission to come up with options, Ukraine’s president said. ([WASHINGTON POST](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- Being of the opinion that a UN-mandated peacekeeping operation could be determinant in concluding the conflict in east Ukraine, Ukraine’s president demands from UN to send an assessment mission to find out possible options.
- Poroshenko requests that the mandate for any peacekeeping operation in the east must extend over the entire occupied territory, including the border, and provide for withdrawal of Russian troops and their weaponry from Ukrainian territory.
- Expressing readiness to discuss a possible U.N. mission, Moscow runs counter to the idea of deploying the UN mission along the separatist region’s border with Russia.
- In mid-term it seems that a limited UN mission might be formed, which may play a depressurizing role for Russia with regards to the world public opinion.
- This will most likely be possible only after Russian government sees the results of Ukraine’s elections and considers whether it needs to change its current policy of maintaining the Donbas conflict as a means to pressure Kyiv.

**6. Ukraine security service accuses Russia of meddling in election.**

21.02.2019. Ukraine’s State Security Service SBU accused Russia on Thursday of meddling in the electoral process in Ukraine by creating illegal structures to help guarantee victory for a certain candidate. ([REUTERS](#))

**7. ‘Semi-fascist’ attack on minorities: Hungarian official slams Ukraine’s education reform.**

22.02.2019. A Hungarian official has branded Ukraine’s education law “semi-fascist,” saying it “tramples” on the rights of minority citizens living in the neighboring country to have access to education in their own language. ([RT](#))

**8. ECHR turns down Ukraine’s request for interim measures concerning Kerch Strait incident.**

22.02.2019. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has turned down Ukraine’s request for interim measures concerning the detention of Ukrainian navy ships in the Kerch Strait on November 25. ([TASS](#))

**OPINIONS**

**9. Ukraine on the eve of election year: public demand, positions of political actors, outline of the new government.**

22.02.2019. Apart from challenges caused by Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for March and October will be the main internal political factors further aggravating the situation in the country. ([UKRAINIAN THINK TANKS](#))

**10. Ukraine: Looking forward, five years after the Maidan Revolution.**

22.02.2019. Five years after the Maidan Revolution drove out an authoritarian president, Ukraine has made significant progress on domestic reform and agreed on the goal of becoming a normal European state. ([BROOKINGS](#))

### KEY DATES

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. ODIHR to invite all member states, including Russia, to send their STOs to Ukraine.

11.02.2019. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights will send invitations to all its member states, including Russia, to send their short-term observers to monitor the elections in Ukraine in 2019. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 2. EU, USA work on new anti-Russian sanctions.

12.02.2019. Brussels and Washington are working on more sanctions against Moscow - as the response to the Russian naval attack and the following capture of Ukrainian sailors in the Kerch Strait in November 2018. ([112.UA](#))

#### 3. Sea Breeze 2019 international exercises to be held in three southern regions of Ukraine.

12.02.2019. The international military exercises Sea Breeze 2019 will be held in Mykolaiv, Kherson and Odessa regions in the north-western part of the Black Sea. ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 4. Ukraine sends a note of protest to Italy after DPR representative office opens in Verona.

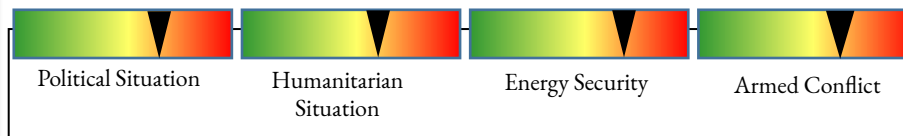
12.02.2019. The Ukrainian Embassy to Italy reported that a note was sent to the Italian Foreign Ministry regarding a DPR (Donetsk People's Republic) representative office which opened in Verona. ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 5. Ukraine will not allow Transnistrian diplomatic mission in Kyiv.

13.02.2019. The speaker of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kateryna Zelenko, said that Kyiv will not agree to open a "diplomatic representation" of the unrecognized republic of Transnistria in Ukraine. ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 6. Ukraine's Interior Ministry, U.S. Dept. of State, 16 ambassadors, leading experts formulate main paradigms of Donbas De-Occupation Plan.

13.02.2019. The United States Institute of Peace hosted a round table with the participation of authoritative experts, members of parliament, the U.S. Department of State, international organizations and representatives of the Interior Ministry of Ukraine, during which the possibilities and risks of Donbas de-occupation plan were discussed, and its main paradigms were formulated, Interior Minister of Ukraine Arsen Avakov has said. ([INTERFAX](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- *After in France, a DPR (Donetsk People's Republic) representative office was opened in Verona, Italy. Condemning and considering the support to pro-Russian militants as unacceptable, the Ukrainian Embassy to Italy protested the opening. It seems that European countries have different views and concerns on Donbas Region which undermines integrity and sovereignty of the Ukrainian state.*
- *One of the most open reaction to Russian practices has come from Great Britain at the Munich Security Conference on Friday. Seeing Russia as an unpunished perpetrator, it is highly likely that Great Britain would depreciate Russia's politics especially focusing on Ukraine and Western Balkans.*

#### 7. EU amendments on Nord Stream 2 in line with Ukraine's requirements - Foreign Ministry.

14.02.2019. The approval of amendments to the EU Gas Directive sets the legal framework for the functioning of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline according to EU norms, but does not remove security risks and can make Russia's behavior even more aggressive. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 8. Russia ready to continue transporting gas via Ukraine in case of competitive conditions.

14.02.2019. Energy Minister A.Novak added that Ukraine has not yet fulfilled obligations assumed for the European Commission on its gas transport system reform. ([TASS](#))

#### 9. NATO partners ready to scale up assistance to Ukraine.

15.02.2019. The NATO partners commend the results of the military reform in Ukraine and highlight the vigor, with which Ukraine tries to master the NATO standards. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 10. We will not leave countries attacked by Russia, including Ukraine, defenseless – Great Britain's defence secretary.

15.02.2019. Russia's crimes are going unpunished, but the United Kingdom will not leave without the defense of the country that Russia is attacking, said Great Britain's Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 11. Donbas situation far from settlement .

16.02.2019. German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that the situation in Donbas is far from settlement. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 12. Russia: Giving Crimea back to Ukraine is 'out of the question'.

17.02.2019. A top Russian lawmaker said that Russia will not entertain the idea of returning Crimea to Ukraine in return for an end to U.S. sanctions and said Russia never "took" Crimea in the first place. ([WASHINGTON EXAMINER](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 13. Russia's Hybrid Strategy in the Sea of Azov: Divide and antagonize.

12.02.2019. Ukrainian Minister of Infrastructure Volodymyr Omelyan stated, on February 1, that "Russia's most recent actions in the Sea of Azov have resulted in Ukraine losing \$360 million" ([THE JAMESTOWN FOUNDATION](#))



### KEY DATES

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Leaked documents show evidence of Russia's war against Ukraine.

05.02.2019. Transparency group Distributed Denial of Secrets has published some 175 gigabytes of leaked documents obtained by hackers from Russian ministries and authorities last month, many of which show evidence of the Kremlin's war in Ukraine. ([HROMADSKIE INTERNATIONAL](#))

#### 2. Kiev is building anti-ship missiles to protect itself from Russia's Navy.

06.02.2019. Ukraine has been developing an anti-ship missile called the Neptune to defend itself from Russia's navy, according to reports. But some analysts say that it is facing setbacks as it works to bolster its defenses. ([NEWSWEEK](#))

#### 3. Belarus builds military roads to Ukrainian border.

07.02.2019. In the Almany Mires nature reserve in Belarus's Brest Oblast, which borders with Ukraine, operations are underway to upgrade the roads, which could be used for military purposes ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 4. Bundestag considers Russia's blockage of navigation in Azov and Black Seas unacceptable.

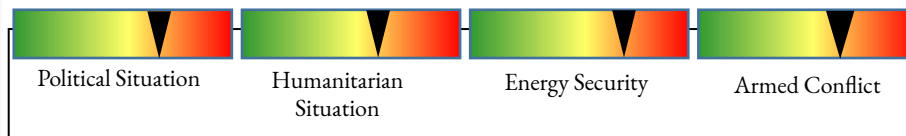
08.02.2019. The issue of Russia's occupation of Crimea remains relevant on the agenda of the German Bundestag. Russia's violation of the norms of international law concerning the blockage of navigation in the waters of the Azov and Black Seas is unacceptable. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 5. France and Germany face off over Russian pipeline.

08.02.2019. Ukraine sees Nord Stream as an existential threat, one that would literally cut it out of the path of Russian exports, potentially leaving it without supplies and depriving it of billions of dollars in much-needed transit fees. ([UNIAN](#))

#### 6. Only NATO, EU membership may guarantee Ukraine its security, independence - Poroshenko.

09.02.2019. Only Ukraine's accession to the European Union and NATO may be the guarantee of the country's independence, security, and welfare, President Poroshenko has said. ([INTERFAX](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- As a probable evidence of the Kremlin's war in Ukraine, transparency group, "Distributed Denial of Secrets" has published some leaked documents. Obtained by hackers from Russian ministries and authorities, some documents focus on Russia's destabilization of the situation in Ukraine's regions. There are also letters from what is presumed to be the so-called "ministry of infrastructure of the DPR" discussing the need for a Kerch Bridge, which connects Russia to the occupied Crimean peninsula. It shows that Russia is officially and directly involved in Ukraine Crisis, which disproves her discourse of "We are not taking part in Ukraine Crisis".
- As the presidential elections in Ukraine approach, the votes seem to be divided between the candidates according to the polls and it is still unclear who will govern the country. Whoever takes the seat, the main issue on his/her way will highly likely be the resolution of Donbas conflict. In this respect, the conflict resolution strategies will most probably be the decisive factor for the voters, which differ among the leading candidates.

#### 7. OSCE chairperson-in-office suggests Ukraine allow Russian observers to monitor presidential elections.

09.02.2019. OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia Miroslav Lajčák has suggested that the Ukrainian party reconsider its decision that the presidential elections in Ukraine will be closed for Russian observers. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 8. Ukraine's path toward EU, NATO: Point of no return.

09.02.2019. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine leveled out the "achievements" of the fugitive ex-President Viktor Yanukovich, enshrining in the Constitution of Ukraine the country's strategic course toward the EU and NATO. ([UNIAN](#))

#### 9. OSCE/ODIHR confirms there will be no Russian observers at Ukraine elections.

09.02.2019. Russia's Foreign Ministry announced that it had decided not to send Russian citizens to Ukraine as part of the observation mission. ([UNIAN](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 10. Europeans make a move in the Sea of Azov.

04.02.2019. Important, Brussels is imposing a systematic approach—not yet a strategy, but already a clear policy. Within this context, Mogherini's phrase about the Black Sea being "European" makes more sense. And it represents an understanding of the deleterious effect that a previous lack of policy follow-through by the EU has had on the regional situation. ([JAMESTOWN](#))

#### 11. Russia looks to strike at Ukraine's south again?

04.02.2019. Four factors make further tensions between Russia and Ukraine along the shores of Crimea and mainland southern Ukraine probable ([I12 UA](#))

#### 12. Russia prepared to occupy Crimea back in 2010 and other things we learned from Yanukovich's treason trial.

06.02.2019. On 24 January, the one-and-a-half year long treason trial of ex-President Viktor Yanukovich finally ended. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

#### 13. What will the 2019 Ukraine elections spell for the Donbas Conflict?

06.02.2019. The March 2019 presidential elections and the October 2019 parliamentary elections could change the balance of power in Kyiv. By February 2019, it is still unclear who will govern the country in 2019-2024 and thus take responsibility for Ukraine's conflict resolution efforts. ([ISPI](#))

### KEY DATES

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. OSCE representative's 'UN initiative' on Donbass is 'surprising' – Russian envoy.

29.01.2019. The Russian representative to the Contact Group on resolving the conflict in eastern Ukraine, Boris Gryzlov, has described as “surprising” OSCE’s special representative Martin Sajdik’s interview. OSCE’s plan allegedly involves the UN in the process through deploying a police mission to Ukraine and creating an EU-sponsored agency on the region’s reconstruction. ([RT](#))

#### 2. Danish minister calls for EU-wide sanctions on Russia over Azov Sea.

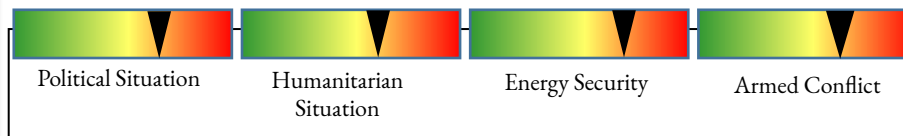
29.01.2019. Denmark’s foreign minister called for European Union-wide sanctions on Russia over a stand-off with Ukraine in the Azov Sea. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 3. Volker sees 'Sajdik's Plan' as platform for implementing Minsk agreements.

31.01.2019. U.S. Special Envoy Kurt Volker says he sees the so-called “peace plan for Ukraine” authored by the OSCE’s Special Representative, Martin Sajdik, as a platform for implementing the Minsk peace agreements on Donbas. “As I understand it, we are not talking about replacing them. We are talking about finding a way to implement them,” Volker said. ([INTERFAX](#)) ([US STATE](#))

#### 4. Ukraine eyes Croatian model for peaceful reintegration of Donbas.

01.02.2019. All militant pseudo-formations should disappear, while the three components of the UN peacekeeping mission - military, policing, and civilian, should emerge. ([UNIAN](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- *Special Representative of OSCE Martin Sajdik's disclosure of a new concept for a joint UN-OSCE International Peace mission seems to be finding a middle way between a U.S.-Ukraine preference for a strong UN-led military and the Russian opt for a weak one. But it has received strong reactions both from Ukrainian and Russian side, while U.S. took a positive stance.*
- *Finding the point of “the need for an international military and police component and an international administration” in Donbas good, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has stated that this plan is not a fundamentally new and has to be worked on.*
- *It seems that Ukraine wants to wait for the cat to jump. She would pick over the “negotiation efforts” to guarantee “a durable solution” in Ukraine.*
- *Although the concept received reactions from both sides, it is better than nothing and might offer a new starting point for negotiations with modifications.*

#### 5. Kiev's reluctance to negotiate with Donbass impedes crisis resolution, says Russian OSCE envoy.

01.02.2019. The Kiev regime’s actions are debilitating the humanitarian situation near the line of contact in Donbass, according to the Russian OSCE envoy. ([TASS](#))

#### 6. Ukraine's minister for occupied territories criticizes Sajdik's 'peace plan' for Ukraine.

01.02.2019. The “peace plan” for Ukraine proposed by OSCE envoy to Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) Martin Sajdik requires a number of decisions by the parliaments of Ukraine and other countries and is questionable ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 7. Russian 28 battalion tactical groups are in readiness for immediate use on the border - Ukraine MoD.

02.02.2019. The groups are 100% staffed by contract servicemen and equipped with modernized weapons and military hardware ([UNIAN](#)).

#### 8. Ukraine, Turkey together to ensure security in Black Sea region – Klimkin.

02.02.2019. 7th Meeting of the Ukrainian-Turkish Joint Strategic Planning Group was held in Odesa. They discussed the issue on providing security in the Black Sea region. Klimkin said that Turkey “plans in the coming years to provide special assistance to the Armed Forces of Ukraine.” ([UKRINFORM](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 9. Is Tymoshenko a pro-Russian candidate? The facts, the fiction, and the mysteries.

29.01.2019. On the eve of the 2019 presidential election in Ukraine, one of the most important questions is how should the country respond to the ongoing Russian aggression. The answer will depend on the policies of the leader Ukrainians elect. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

#### 10. OSCE Officials reveal concept for International Mission in Ukraine's East.

30.01.2019. The disclosure of this plan and the ambiguities in the published text have generated strong reactions from Kyiv, Moscow, Donetsk and Luhansk. ([JAMESTOWN](#))



### KEY DATES

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

**21 April** - Presidential elections (Round 2)

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Transnistrian leader grateful to Russia for backing peacekeeping operation.

23.01.2019. Leader of the unrecognized Transnistrian republic Vadim Krasnoselsky pointed out at his meeting with Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Kozak that Russian peacekeepers played a key role in maintaining peace along the Dniester River ([TASS](#))

#### 2. IMF tells Ukraine to speed up reforms.

23.01.2019. IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde said on Wednesday she had urged Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko to proceed with reforms quicker, while reiterating that the International Monetary Fund was ready to continue supporting Ukraine. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 3. Moscow and Kyiv respond to German proposal on the Kerch Strait and Azov Sea .

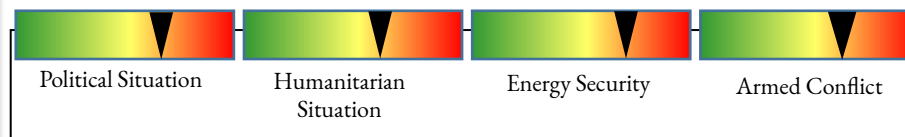
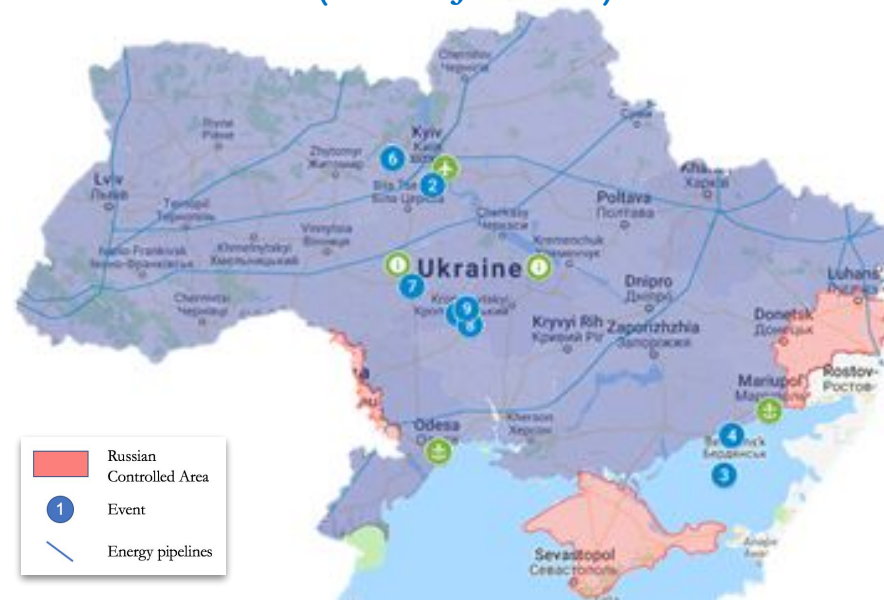
24.01.2019. Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov seems actually keen for German and French observers to arrive as soon as possible at the Kerch Strait—albeit on Russian-defined ground rules. ([EURASIA DAILY MONITOR](#))

#### 4. PACE adopts resolution on Azov crisis.

24.01.2019. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) urges Russia to release the detained Ukrainian sailors. PACE adopted the relevant resolution on Thursday, ([112UA](#))

#### 5. NATO-Russia Council meets in Brussels.

25.01.2019. The NATO-Russia Council, which brings together all 29 NATO Allies and Russia, met in Brussels. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, who chaired the meeting, noted that Allies and Russia discussed two important topics: Ukraine and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. ([NATO](#))



### ASSESSMENT

▪ *After the assault on Ukrainian naval ships in Kerch Strait, Russia has launched a short-lived blockade of the Strait. Following a cooling-off period, the Strait is open now to safe passage of commercial ships. Germany and France's willing to observe the measures taken in the Strait seem to be encouraging. The approach of "beginning with a short-term fix and bringing later on a long-term solution" might be a key point to de-escalate the situation. Nevertheless, it seems that this initiative through finding a solution regarding Kerch Strait is bypassing the OSCE which may undermine the role of international organizations in fostering cooperation. setting international norms.*

#### 6. Ukraine's ex-president Viktor Yanukovich found guilty of treason.

25.01.2019. Exiled former leader sentenced to 13 years' jail over 2014 protests and Russian invasion ([THE GUARDIAN](#))

#### 7. U.S. Senate submits resolution on strengthening defense assistance to Ukraine.

25.01.2019. The U.S. Senate has submitted a resolution calling for the strengthening of defense assistance to Ukraine, and supported the abolition of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, the press service of the Ukrainian embassy in the U.S. has said. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 8. Ukrainian foreign intelligence: Russia has allocated \$350 million for interference in Ukraine's elections.

27.01.2019. Yehor Bozhok, chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, told that the Russian government has allocated an additional \$350 million to its efforts to destabilize Ukraine. ([UAWIRE](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 9. Kyiv moving toward breaking diplomatic relations with Moscow.

22.01.2019. When one country invades another and occupies part of its territory, the victim normally breaks diplomatic relations with the aggressor. But despite the fact that Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, has illegally annexed part of Ukraine's territory and continues its aggression, Ukraine still maintains diplomatic relations with Russia. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

#### 10. Russia, Ukraine: NATO hits its limits in Black Sea.

22.01.2019. Though NATO has made it clear that it wants to support Ukraine when it comes to freedom of navigation in the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov, the reality is that this area is still very much at the mercy of Russian power. The Kremlin has been growing assertive and harassing both civilian and Ukrainian navy vessels traveling in the area, but short of a military engagement, there isn't a lot standing in Russia's way. Such an armed engagement would be conducted from a position of inferiority for Ukraine and the West in this particular area, and it would come with a great risk of escalating beyond. Therefore, NATO navies will find themselves limited to a largely symbolic presence in the wider Black Sea. ([STRATFOR](#))

**KEY DATES**

**31 March** - Presidential elections (Round 1)

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**KEY EVENTS**

**1. Ukrainian General: Kyiv has a plan for liberation of Donbas.**

15.01.2019. The Lieutenant General of Ukrainian Foreign Intelligence, Vasily Bogdan stated in an interview with the news outlet Fakty that Ukraine has a plan to liberate the territories of the Donbas which are held by the pro-Russian militants, and the country's leadership hopes this will be achieved without the use of force. ([UAWIRE](#))

**2. Ukraine could soon cease to be a country, Russia's top security official says.**

16.01.2019. Ukraine could lose its statehood if the former Soviet republic continues to be divided by competing interests, Russia's top security official has said. ([INDEPENDENT](#))

**3. Russia warns Ukraine about its end as state.**

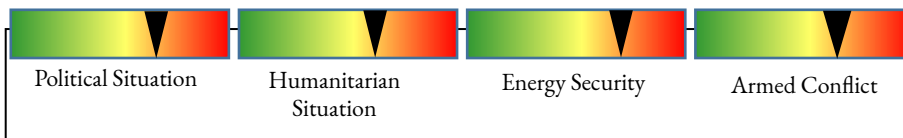
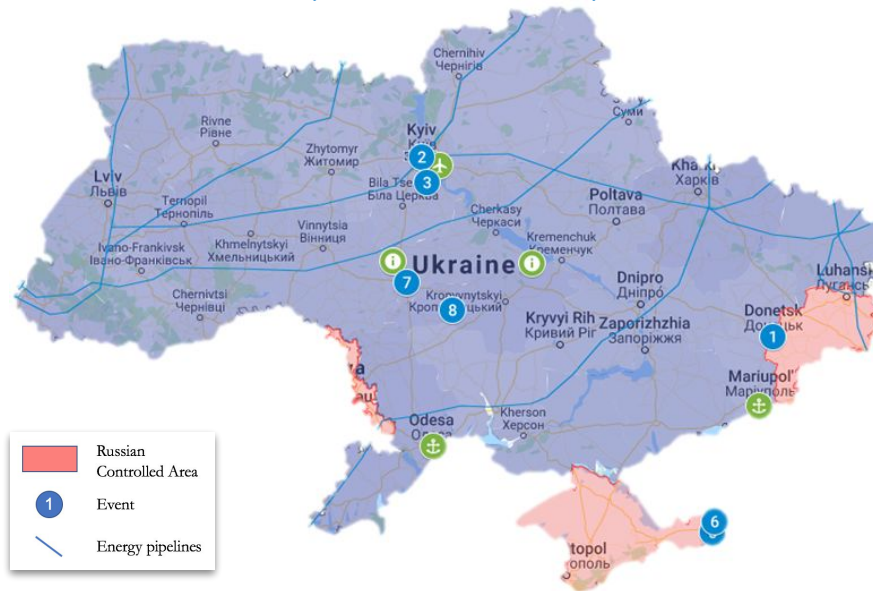
16.01.2019. The U.S. administration actually controls the Kyiv authorities and Poroshenko personally, - Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev ([112UA](#))

**4. Baltic States, Poland in favor of "Azov package" of sanctions on Russia – Estonian Foreign Minister.**

17.01.2019. The Baltic States and Poland are in favor of imposing new sanctions in connection with the events in the Kerch Strait, Estonian Foreign Minister Sven Mikser has said. ([INTERFAX](#))

**5. German minister: Kerch Strait is now open for shipping.**

18.01.2019. It is widely acknowledged that ships can pass through the Kerch Strait - a body of water shared between Russia and Ukraine - is now free, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Friday. ([REUTERS](#))



**ASSESSMENT**

- *Twenty five years ago this week, the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom signed the "Budapest Memorandum" on Security Assurances with Ukraine. It guarantees respect for Ukraine's borders, independence, and sovereignty. Even if there occurs no events related to Ukraine originating from Russia, Russia still indeed violates "the Budapest Memorandum" at any given time. Besides, Russia's argument (Russia signed the Budapest Memorandum with the Ukrainian government that existed under President Leonid Kuchma, not the government coming to power after 2013-14 Maidan revolution) for not abiding by the memorandum remains groundless.*
- *There seems no improvement on the situation between Ukraine and Russia until the presidential election is held in Ukraine. Since Putin likely wants to see the defeat of Poroshenko, we might see even a deteriorating situation before the elections.*

**6. Germany, France could contribute to guarantees of free navigation in Kerch Strait - Maas.**

18.01.2019. Free navigation in the Kerch Strait is now guaranteed but that Germany and France could also contribute to this process, according to German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas. ([INTERFAX](#))

**7. US destroyer enters Black Sea 'to support regional partners', Russia sends ship to 'monitor'.**

19.01.2019. The destroyer USS Donald Cook has entered the Black Sea less than two weeks after another US Navy vessel was deployed there. Moscow says it will watch the actions of the US ship closely. ([RT](#))

**OPINIONS**

**7. Ukraine–Nord Stream 2: Struggle Over Gas Transit.**

15.01.2019. The Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline project is primarily perceived in terms of a political venture that goes against basic EU principles and poses threat to European solidarity. ([WARSAW INSTITUTE](#))

**8. 25 years after Ukraine denuclearized, Russian aggression continues to rise.**

18.01.2019. The tragic situation in Ukraine, and the illegal Russian action that caused it, is not only a humanitarian issue and gross violation of the modern international order. It also carries significant implications for global nonproliferation. This week's anniversary passed with far too little recognition of the great sacrifices that Ukraine has made over the past 25 years—sacrifices that made the United States and the West safer. ([BROOKINGS](#))

**9. It's time to stand up to Russia's aggression in Ukraine.**

18.01.2019. No such negotiations are likely until after the March Ukrainian presidential election. At that point, negotiations should pick up on suggestions made by both Putin and Poroshenko that an international peacekeeping force be deployed to the Donbass, accompanied by an interim UN administrative authority. Russia would thus withdraw its forces back across the Ukrainian-Russian border, returning the Donbass to Ukrainian sovereignty and control. This resolution to the Donbass would still leave Crimea unresolved. But it would be a first step toward getting Russia's relations with the United States and Europe back into a more manageable framework. ([FOREIGN POLICY](#))



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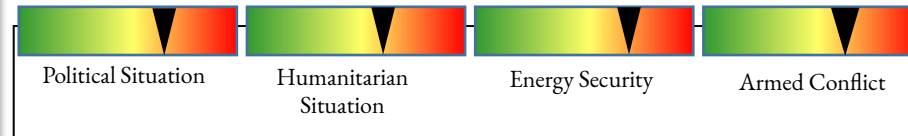
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### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Ukraine sends ECHR full statement against Russia's actions during Azov crisis.

07.01.2019. Ukraine submitted a full-fledged statement against the Russian Federation on the violation of the rights of 24 Ukrainian sailors captured near the Kerch Strait in November last year to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). ([112](#))

#### 2. It is easier for Ukraine to become NATO member than EU member.

09.01.2019. It will be easier for Ukraine to become a member of NATO than a member of the European Union, this is a matter of a medium-term prospect, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin has said. ([INTERFAX](#))

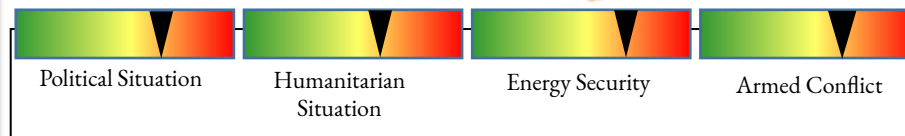
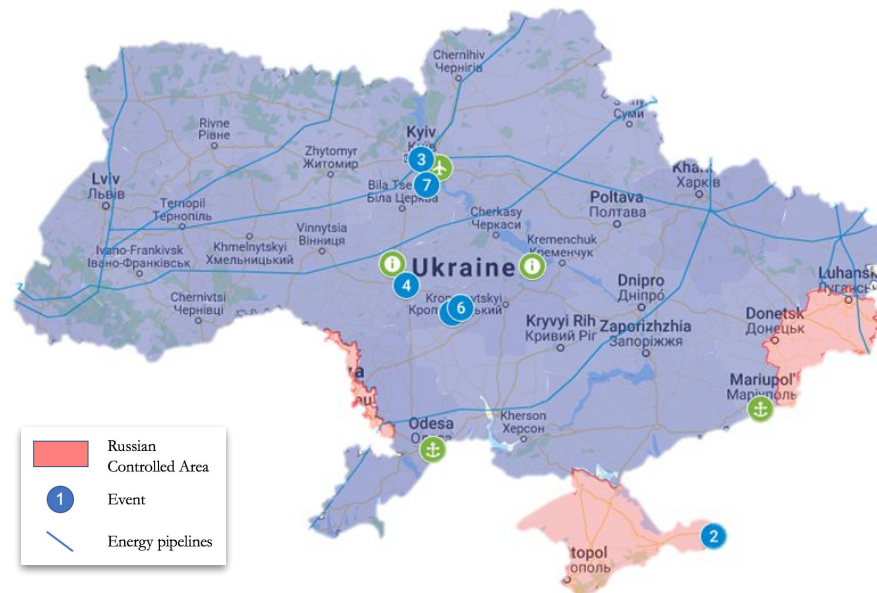
10.01.2019. Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak has said NATO representatives have changed their positions on Ukraine's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance, and noted comprehensive assistance received by Ukraine from the bloc. ([INTERFAX](#))

#### 3. Ukraine to continue using Kerch Strait despite Russia's threats, - Defence Minister.

10.01.2019. Ukraine will continue carrying out passages through the Kerch Strait and sending vessels to Azov Sea ports despite the existing danger, as Ukraine's Defence Minister Stepan Poltorak said. ([112UA](#))

#### 4. Now-independent Ukrainian Orthodox church set to be major player internationally, Illarionov says.

10.01.2019. Russian commentator Andrey Illarionov has carefully compared the status of Ukrainian Orthodoxy in terms of 25 basic issues of church life and concluded that the new Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) is now "completely out from under the control of the Russian Orthodox Church – Moscow Patriarchate (ROC MP), and become an independent actor in international church affairs. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- Usage of Azov Sea, Mariupol and Berdyansk ports is of vital importance for Ukrainian economy. Russian actions to limit the use of Kerch Strait exclusively by itself may bring about new crises. Insistence of Ukraine to use Kerch Strait with the aim of leaving the passage open may increase the tension in the region and may pave the way for new possible attacks.

#### 5. Ukraine will try to revive neglected navy this year.

11.01.2019. Ukraine, with a weak and neglected navy, must be ready to bite back, and hastily rebuild its sea forces. Several new warships are expected to be launched, together with belated new coastal defense projects in the Azov Sea. ([KYIV POST](#))

#### 6. Ukraine signs agreement to procure Turkish drones.

12.01.2019. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko announced that a deal has been signed to purchase Turkish Bayraktar Tactical Block 2 unmanned aerial vehicles for the Ukrainian military. ([DEFENSE POST](#))

#### 7. Russia seeks to create "land corridor" to occupied Crimea – Joint Forces Commander.

12.01.2019. "Now, the enemy is concentrating its efforts mainly on the Mariupol direction and in the Azov Sea area," said the military official. ([UNIAN](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 8. What to expect in 2019.

11.01.2019. The year promises to be packed with political news, with likely two rounds of presidential elections (March 31 and April 21) and parliamentary election in October. There are also personalities to keep an eye on in sports, where Ukraine consistently punches above its weight, and other notable events and historic anniversaries. ([KYIV POST](#))

#### 9. Ukrainian Orthodox Church independence is a mistake.

11.01.2019. The secession of an Orthodox Church of Ukraine has drawn widespread criticism. But Patriarch Bartholomew I may have survived the onslaught. ([DW](#))



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Ukrainian Navy to engage int'l observers for next Kerch Strait passage - Official.

02.01.2019. The Ukrainian Navy will take international observers onboard during passage through the Kerch Strait, Yury Biryukov, an advisor to the Ukrainian president and the Ukrainian defense minister, said on Wednesday. ([SPUTNIK](#))

#### 2. Ukrainian Navy vessel opens fire in Black Sea.

02.01.2019. Pryluky missile boat fired warning shots, as the vessel that flew the Tanzanian flag carried the illegal cargo; the vessel's crew disobeyed the order to stop. ([112 UA](#))

#### 3. American think-tank predicts Putin will escalate war in Ukraine.

04.01.2019. American think tank, the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), has endorsed that warning in a detailed assessment that has been widely-read by American and other countries' political and military decision-makers and has added urgency to the calls for more Western support for Ukraine. ([KYIV POST](#))

#### 4. Are Russia and Ukraine heading toward war in the Sea of Azov?

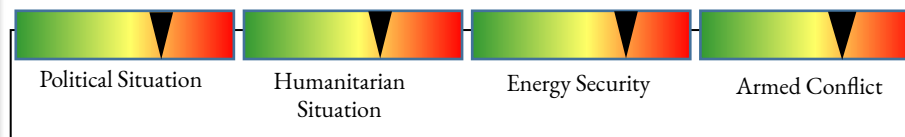
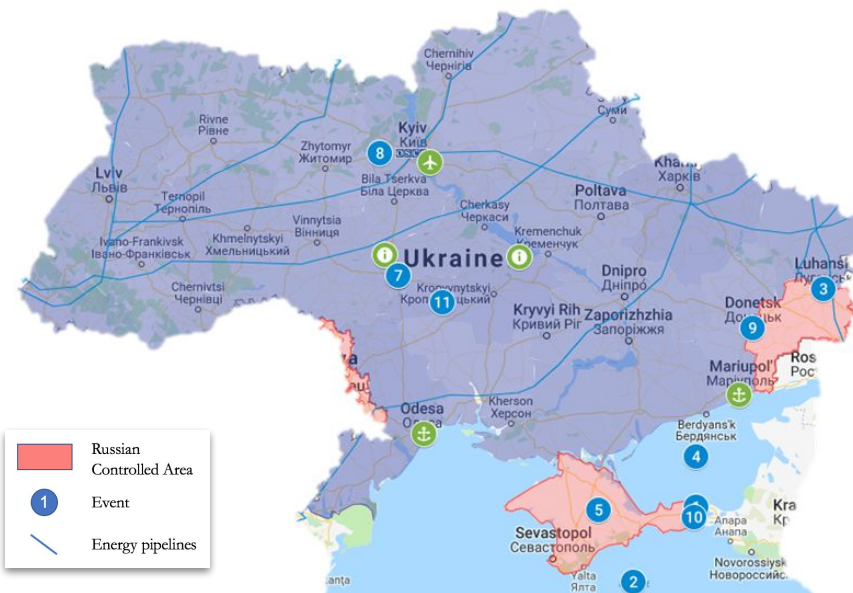
04.01.2019. In 2019 Annual Forecast, Stratfor noted that the Sea of Azov will be the site of heightened conflict between Ukraine and Russia this year. A standoff toward the end of 2018 and recent naval movements by Russia, Ukraine, and NATO countries point to the potential for a more serious confrontation. ([THE NATIONAL INTEREST](#))

#### 5. Mejlis deputy chairman: Receiving Tomos is another step towards de-occupation of Crimea.

04.01.2019. Deputy Chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people Akhtem Chiygöz believes that creation of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine is another step towards the de-occupation of Crimea. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 6. A plan to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian gas looks shaky.

05.01.2019. For years, western European countries have worried about their access to gas, almost two-fifths of which is supplied by Russian pipes. These fears have not receded since in 2014 Russia cut off gas to Ukraine, the main thoroughfare through which its gas arrives in eu countries. ([THE ECONOMIST](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- *Having been for centuries under the authority of the leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church (which is the world's largest) in Moscow, the recently formed Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been granted independence. It is highly likely that this split up worsen the situation in confrontation between Russia and Ukraine due to leading a new layer of debate.*
- *Russia has repaired all nuclear weapon storage facilities in Crimea. It seems that the more militarization in Crimea, the higher possibility of threat (including nuclear) and war from the peninsula.*

#### 7. Ukraine Orthodox Church granted independence from Russian Church.

05.01.2019. The recently formed Orthodox Church of Ukraine has been granted independence, marking a historic split from the Russian Church. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew - the head of the global Orthodox Church - has signed a document in Istanbul, Turkey, to that effect. ([BBC](#))

#### 8. Termination of railway communication with Russia "inevitable" – Ukraine minister.

05.01.2019. Railway communication between Ukraine and Russia will cease, either by Cabinet decision, or as Ukrainians gradually stop traveling to the neighboring aggressor state, according to Infrastructure Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Omelyan. ([UNIAN](#))

#### 9. Russian proxies in Donbas continue hampering activities of OSCE monitors.

05.01.2019. Russian occupation forces in Donbas prohibit OSCE Special Monitoring Mission observers from entering the facilities and territories under their control, Joint Forces Operation HQ wrote, citing information from the Ukrainian side to the Joint Control and Coordination Center. ([UNIAN](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 10. Ukraine prepared for full-scale war, says military expert.

02.01.2019. General Romanenko emphasized that Russia's attack on Ukrainian boats in the Kerch Strait on 25 November was itself reason enough to impose martial law. At the same time, the military expert admits that sufficient reason had already existed, starting with the annexation of Crimea. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

#### 11. Ukraine's Eurointegration drags feet without EU membership perspectives.

05.01.2019. During the five years since Euromaidan, the fact that Ukraine has increasingly turned toward Europe is undeniable, despite the constant attempts of Russia to return the country to its orbit. The majority of Ukrainian politicians like to talk about Eurointegration and a pro-European path for Ukraine. ([EUROMAIDAN PRESS](#))

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Kiev's navy says 'we will be ready' and prepared to use 'weapons' if Moscow attacks again.

24.12.2018. One month after Russia attacked three Ukrainian navy ships in the Kerch Strait, Ukraine's navy chief said his country was prepared to defend its sovereignty from its bigger neighbor and exert its freedom to navigate in the body of water. ([NEWSWEEK](#))

#### 2. The Royal Navy sent a message to Russia in the Black Sea (and it was pretty weak).

26.12.2018. The ship the British Royal Navy deployed to the Black Sea in order to send a message to Russia lacks heavy weaponry and could not defend itself from intensive attack. ([THE NATIONAL INTEREST](#))

#### 3. Russia warns Ukraine and NATO against sending ships through the Kerch Strait.

26.12.2018. Moscow called on Ukraine and its Western partners to abandon the new attempt to send naval ships through the Kerch Strait. ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 4. Ukraine will never refuse from navigation in Kerch Strait, Poroshenko pledges.

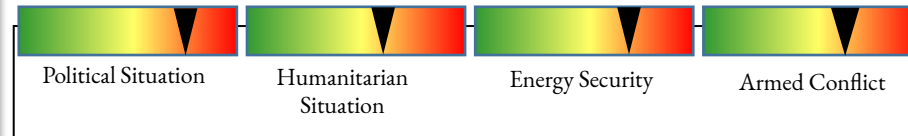
26.12.2018. Kiev will never stop using the Kerch Strait for ship traffic and for freight shipping to Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov, President Pyotr Poroshenko said at a meeting of the National Defense and Security Council ([TASS](#))

#### 5. Russia completes Crimea security fence.

28.12.2018. Russia has finished building a high-tech security fence along annexed Crimea's border with mainland Ukraine. The fence, more than 60km (37 miles) long, is topped with barbed wire and has hundreds of sensors. ([BBC](#))

#### 6. Russia bans \$500 million worth of imports from Ukraine in retaliatory sanctions.

29.12.2018. Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has signed a ban on the import of more than 50 Ukrainian goods, worth \$510 million. The move comes in response to recently prolonged Kiev's embargo on Russian products. ([RT](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- 30 days of Martial Law in Ukraine ends without any clear achievement. Russia still seizes the Ukrainian sailors. By rejecting French, German proposal for an appeal for Russian courts' decision on detention of the Ukrainian sailors, Russia still wants to show Ukraine as the provocator in the Kerch incident.
- From the very beginning of Ukraine Crisis, Russia is progressing gradually with concrete achievements, while international actors keep on saying their support to Ukraine. Erection of border fences in Crimea seems to be another concrete step towards a potential action to shatter these actors' faith of "Crimea belongs to Ukraine".

#### 7. Ukraine's martial law is over — but there's no end in sight to tensions with Russia.

29.12.2018. One month after Russia shot at and seized three of its ships, Ukraine's martial law expired on Thursday with many still skeptical about why it was imposed and what it achieved. ([NBC NEWS](#))

#### 8. Poroshenko signs law on adjacent zone of Ukraine.

29.12.2018. The main objective of the document is to harmonize the maritime legislation of Ukraine with the legislation of other Black Sea states and other states parties to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the presidential press service said on December 29. The law also aimed at preventing smuggling and illegal ship calls to the officially shut-down ports in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. ([UNIAN](#))

#### 9. Moscow rejects French, German appeal to release Ukrainian sailors.

29.12.2018. The Russian Foreign Ministry has rejected what it says are unacceptable demands by Germany and France to release Ukrainian soldiers held by Russia. ([RFERL](#))

#### 10. Russian-led forces near Luhansk massing weapons, conducting live-fire drills.

30.12.2018. Forty tanks and other military hardware were spotted beyond the withdrawal lines but outside of designated storage sites. ([UNIAN](#), [OSCE](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 11. Is a Russian military operation against Ukraine likely in the near future?

26.12.2018. Almost every year there is a sizable artillery duel that takes place after the holiday truce, and so a notable escalation in violence is likely in January, but there is no evidence of Russian preparations for a major assault in Ukraine, certainly not in Crimea. It is possible, but highly improbable. ([RUSSIAN MILITARY ANALYSIS](#))



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Kiev to send warships into sea of Azov, denounced as 'provocation' by Moscow.

17.12.2018. A top Ukrainian official has said that his country will send more warships to confront Russia in the Sea of Azov, a decision that Moscow has denounced as a "provocation." ([NEWSWEEK](#))

#### 2. Russia deploys fighter jets to Crimea amid Ukraine tensions.

17.12.2018. Russia's Ministry of Defense said it was permanently deploying more than 10 Sukhoi SU-27 and SU-30 fighter jets to Crimea after Lavrov alleged Ukraine was preparing "a provocation" near Crimea before the end of the year. ([HAARETZ](#))

#### 3. NATO ship arrives in Black Sea ahead of schedule to assist Ukraine.

19.12.2018. The British survey ship HMS Echo (H87) entered the Black Sea on December 17. The ship arrived ahead of schedule due to Russia's aggression ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 4. Ukraine invites NATO to accompany its warships in Sea of Azov.

19.12.2018. It would be very logical for NATO ships, invited by Ukraine to the ports of the Sea of Azov, to prove that Russia must comply with international law. However, this initiative has not received a response yet. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 5. Putin says Russia ready to respect Azov Sea accord with Ukraine.

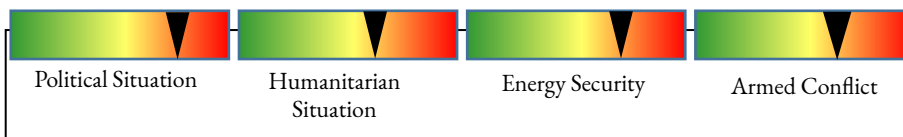
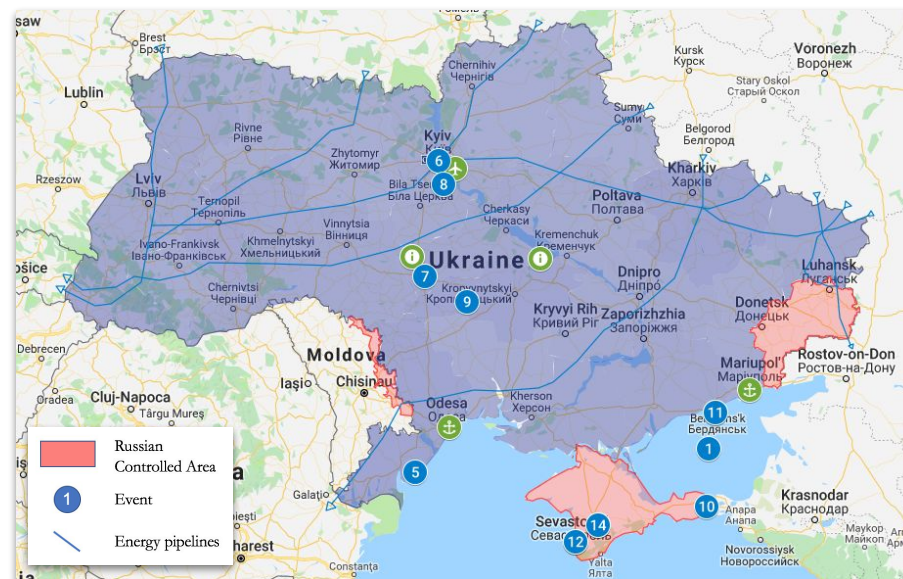
20.12.2018. Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that he was willing to respect a Russian-Ukrainian accord governing the joint use of the Azov Sea and that Moscow wanted to normalise the situation around the waters. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 6. Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova sign memorandum on reintegration of territories.

20.12.2018. Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova signed a memorandum on creation of an interagency platform for the exchange of experience in the integration of territories not controlled by the governments and the counteraction to the Russia. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 7. Ukraine's defense industry to move to NATO standards in 2019.

20.12.2018. The Ukrainian state-owned concern Ukroboronprom, the leading arms manufactured and exporter in Ukraine, plans to switch to the standards of NATO starting 2019. ([UAWIRE](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- Russian increasing military offensive build-up on Ukraine's eastern border and in Crimea including the latest deployment of the fighter jets can be read as:
  - Russia's aim at deterring direct Western military support to Ukraine for the status of the Kerch Strait and Azov Sea.
  - Russian preparation for a possible further offensive against Ukraine as a response to another trial of Ukraine to send navy elements to the Sea of Azov.
  - A show of force in response to the UN General Assembly resolution (less likely).
- Continuously increasing tensions on the Russia-Ukraine conflict is getting more likely to turn into a military confrontation in the Black Sea or Eastern Ukraine.

#### 8. EU prolongs economic sanctions by six months.

21.12.2018. Given that no progress has been made for the implementation of Minsk agreements, the European Council took the political decision to roll-over the economic sanctions against Russia by another 6 months. ([EU](#))

#### 9. Ukraine Defense Minister orders for preparation for building a new naval base in the Sea of Azov.

21.12.2018. Ukrainian Defense Minister Stepan Poltorak ordered to prepare the required documentation for the construction of a new naval base in the Sea of Azov. ([UAWIRE](#))

#### 10. UK defence secretary to Ukraine - Black Sea does not belong to Russia.

21.12.2018. Secretary of State for Defence Gavin Williamson visited Ukraine on Friday where he told his Ukrainian counterpart that the Black Sea did not belong to Russia and that Britain had sent a Royal Navy ship there to show Kiev did not stand alone. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 11. Increasing U.S. Security Assistance to Ukraine's Navy.

21.12.2018. In response to Russia's dangerous escalation and unjustified Nov 25 attack on three Ukrainian naval vessels near the Kerch Strait, the Department of State, subject to Congressional approval, will provide an additional \$10 million in Foreign Military Financing to further build Ukraine's naval capabilities. ([US STATE](#))

#### 12. Russian fighter jets land in Crimea amid Ukraine tensions.

22.12.2018. More than a dozen SU-27 and SU-30 fighter jets which Russia is deploying to boost its air force, amid heightened tensions with Ukraine, arrived in Belbek Air Base Crimea. ([REUTERS](#))

#### 13. UN General Assembly adopts Ukraine's Resolution on Crimea.

23.12.2018. The UN General Assembly adopted the Ukrainian resolution on human rights violations in Crimea. A total of 65 countries voted for the adoption of the document, 27 countries voted against, while 70 others abstained. ([SPUTNIK](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 1. Warning Update: Russian preparations for military operations in Ukraine continue.

23.12.2018. Russia continues to build up and prepare its military forces for possible offensive operations against Ukraine from the Crimean Peninsula and the east. ISW assesses that Russia has the capability to go on the offensive in Ukraine imminently and is conducting military maneuvers consistent with that intent. ([ISW](#))



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. EU adds 9 persons involved in 'elections' in Donbas to sanctions list.

10.12.2018. The Council added nine persons to the list of those subject to restrictive measures over actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine because of their involvement in the so-called 'elections' in Donbas. ([EU](#))

#### 2. Political advisors of 'Normandy Four' in Berlin to discuss Kerch Strait conflict.

11.12.2018. A meeting in the "Normandy format" at the level of political advisers regarding the situation in the Sea of Azov is to be held in Berlin on Tuesday. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 3. Russia's long-term disinformation plan for the Azov Sea.

12.12.2018. The moment when the disinformation campaign around the Azov Sea started was not when Russia seized three Ukrainian vessels and their crews after opening fire at them on November 25. In fact, the campaign had been launched much earlier. ([EUROMAIDAN](#))

#### 4. EU Parliament calls to stop Nord Stream 2, impose sanctions if Russia doesn't release captured sailors.

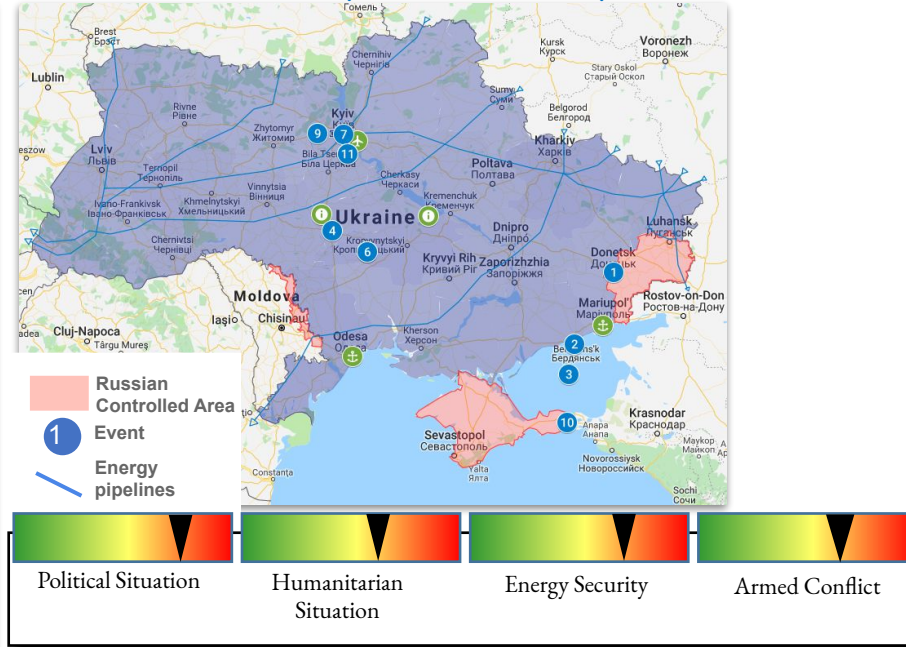
12.12.2018. The European Parliament adopted a resolution calling to stop the construction of the NordStream2 pipeline and to close access to EU ports for Russian ships coming from the Sea of Azov condemned Russia's aggression in the Kerch Strait, calling for imposing additional targeted sanctions if the Ukrainian sailors whom Russia captured in the Black Sea are not released. ([EU](#), [EUROMAIDAN](#), [EU](#), [UNIAN](#))

#### 5. Next meeting in 'Normandy format' scheduled for January.

12.12.2018. The next meeting in the "Normandy format" is scheduled for January, German government spokesperson Steffen Seibert has said. ([UKRINFORM](#))

#### 6. NATO Secretary General and President Poroshenko discuss developments in and around the Sea of Azov.

13.12.2018. Mr. Stoltenberg affirmed that NATO will continue to provide Ukraine with strong political and practical support, including around 40 million euros pledged by Allies for NATO-Ukraine Trust Funds. He also announced that NATO will deliver secure communications equipment for the Ukrainian Armed Forces by the end of the year. ([NATO](#))



### ASSESSMENT

- *Russia still maintains the seizure of Ukrainian vessels and sailors since the November 25 naval incident in the Black Sea which has served as a test to her for the international reaction.*
- *While the German proposal of OSCE monitoring expansion to Azov was rejected by Russia and Normandy format meeting was failed, there is still no serious action taken by the West, which likely serves as an invitation for Moscow to push further in its aggression.*
- *Ukraine lacks sufficient leverage to force Moscow to release its captured sailors and also other political prisoners sitting in detention in Russia. Moscow will highly likely use this current crisis to put pressure on the Ukrainian government and particularly on Poroshenko himself, whose electoral campaign explicitly based on portraying himself as the restorer of the Ukrainian military.*

#### 7. EU leaders agree to extend sanctions against Russia.

13.12.2018. The EU's economic sanctions against Russia will be prolonged for another half-a-year, European Council President Donald Tusk has announced on Twitter. The decision was made "unanimously" by the member states during an EU summit in Brussels. ([RT](#), [DW](#))

#### 8. USA and Canada pledge military support to Ukraine.

15.12.2018. At a press conference, after the U.S. - Canada 2+2 Ministerial meeting, US Secretary of Defense James Mattis and Canadian Minister of National Defense Harjit Sajjan both pledged the joint support for NATO European partners and to Ukraine amid Russia's recent military escalation in Europe. ([US](#), [UAWIRE](#))

### OPINIONS

#### 9. Martial Law in Ukraine: A Rehearsal for War.

12.12.2018. The Verkhovna Rada implemented Martial Law in selected regions of Ukraine that is to last until December 26. President Petro Poroshenko pushed the legislature to adopt this measure after the Russian Coast Guard attacked three Ukrainian naval ships and captured their crew a day earlier.

([EURASIA DAILY MONITOR](#))

#### 10. Some Lessons From Germany's Failed Proposal on the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait.

13.12.2018. Apparently, Berlin missed the repeated warning signals that were contained in Lavrov's remarks and the Kremlin's press releases. Perhaps the Normandy-format meeting intended for January would, if held, occasion more creative proposals from Berlin. However, failure remains likely if Germany and the EU refrain from adding economic sanctions on Russia, on the mistaken logic that more sanctions jeopardize a political solution. Whereas, in fact, more sanctions could facilitate a solution on Western terms. ([LAMESTOWN1](#), [2](#))

#### 11. How 2019 elections may shape Ukraine's future policy.

15.12.2018. The year of 2019 would be a decisive year for Ukraine as the country will elect a new president and a new parliament. The two elections, slated to be held on March 31, 2019, and Oct. 27, 2019, respectively, will determine the country's domestic and foreign policy for the next five years. ([XINHUANET](#))





## KEY EVENTS

### 1. US Secretary of State Pompeo speaks at NATO.

04.12.2018. "We will collectively develop a set of responses that demonstrate to Russia that this behavior is simply unacceptable." ([US](#))

### 2. The meeting of the North Atlantic Council with Georgia and Ukraine in Foreign Ministers' session.

04.12.2018. NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg "We call on Russia to immediately release the Ukrainian sailors and ships it seized. Russia must allow freedom of navigation." "There is already a lot of NATO in the Black Sea. And we will continue to assess our presence in the region." ([NATO](#))

### 3. Putin slams Poroshenko's attempt to contact him on phone as pre-election stunt.

05.12.2018. Russian President Vladimir Putin has said he is not responding to his Ukrainian counterpart Pyotr Poroshenko's attempts to contact him on the phone as he does not wish to take part in the latter's election campaign. ([TASS](#))

### 4. NATO intends to increase its presence in Black Sea-Ukraine.

05.12.2018. NATO countries will soon take steps in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the Kerch Strait. One of the elements of the response is strengthening the presence of the Alliance in the Black Sea, stated Ukrainian Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin. ([UAWIRE](#))

### 5. US makes preparations to sail warship into Black Sea amid Russia-Ukraine tensions.

05.12.2018. The US military has requested that the State Department notify Turkey of its possible plans to sail a warship into the Black Sea. ([CNN](#))

### 6. Verkhovna Rada doubles zone of Ukrainian control in Black Sea.

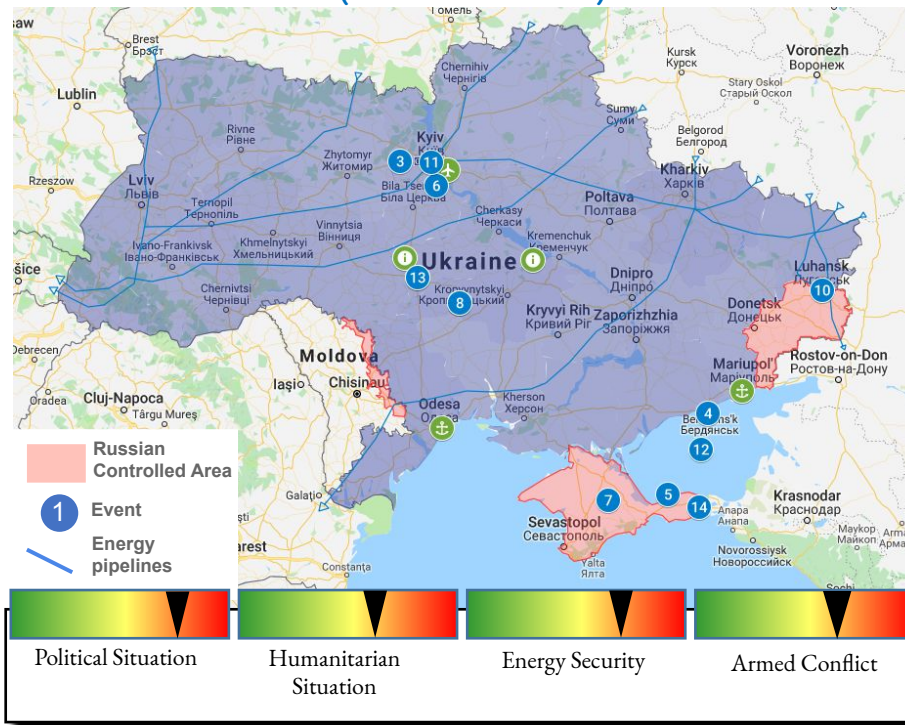
06.12.2018. Ukraine's Verkhovna Rada has adopted a measure on the adjacent zone of Ukraine, which will actually increase its control in the Black Sea. ([INTERFAX](#))

### 7. Russia deploys nuclear weapon carriers in Crimea – Yelchenko.

06.12.2018. Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Volodymyr Yelchenko has said Russia deployed in occupied Crimea carriers and other means capable of delivering nuclear weapons. ([UNIAN](#))

### 8. No consensus in EU for new sanctions on Russia over Ukraine.

07.12.2018. Germany does not envision EU sanctions against Russia over Ukraine as long as de-escalation efforts continue, Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said on Friday. "At this time I believe it would be wrong to talk about new sanctions, because efforts are being made to reduce tensions," he said. ([RT](#))



## ASSESSMENT

- The latest Russian deployments in Crimea and Ukrainian border shows that Russia is using the Ukrainian and Western reactions to the latest incident in Kerch as a pretext to strengthen its military presence in the region, which lets her to consolidate its power in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea.
- As a retaliation to the latest Russian aggressive actions in Kerch and ongoing seizure of Ukrainian sailors, it is still not clear if the Western Alliance will develop an effective series of countermeasures. While there seems no consensus on new economic sanctions on the EU side, we might see an increased military presence of NATO and the US in the Black Sea, not violating the provisions of the Montreux Convention.
- The actions reflecting "closure of democratic doors" will not change for the better but will highly likely lead to a stalemate. As such, considering also Putin's statement on his refusal of Poroshenko's call, the upcoming Ukrainian presidential elections seem to have a considerable effect on the current actions of both Ukraine and Russia.

### 9. US says it has conducted 'extraordinary' flight over Ukraine in warning to Russia.

07.12.2018. The United States has said it has conducted an "extraordinary" flight over Ukraine amid escalating tensions between Kiev and Moscow. ([INDEPENDENT](#))

### 10. Satellite imagery shows hundreds of Russian tanks near the border with Ukraine.

08.12.2018. Satellite imagery from Google Earth taken on November shows hundreds of Russian main battle tanks (T-64 and T-62M), a thousand military trucks, artillery systems tankers at a new military base on the outskirts of the Kamensk-Shakhtinsky, only 18 kilometers away from the border with toward rebel-held territory in eastern Ukraine. ([DEFENCE BLOG](#))

### 11. Poroshenko to sign bill terminating friendship treaty with Russia.

08.12.2018. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that on Monday, December 10, he will sign a bill on the termination of the Friendship Treaty with the Russian Federation from April 1919 into law. ([INTERFAX](#))

## OPINIONS

### 12. Does Ukraine need a martial law? Comments by Ukrainian security and military experts.

05.12.2018. After Russia attacked and seized Ukrainian ships and sailors in the Black Sea on November 25th, Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko suggested introducing a martial law in the country. Poroshenko's argument is that the martial law will better protect Ukraine against a plausible military aggression from Russia. ([UKRAINE WORLD](#))

### 13. Could the new fighting between Russia and Ukraine escalate into all-out war?

05.12.2018. Russia and Ukraine have been fighting for several years on land, but the two clashed at sea recently. How likely is this maritime conflict to escalate? ([THE WASHINGTON POST](#))

### 14. Russia-Ukraine Row: NATO's Eastward Trajectory is the real problem.

07.12.2018. Moscow says the Ukrainian ships ignored the normal procedure for crossing the Kerch Strait and so were treated as hostile craft. The Kremlin claims Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko planned the "provocation" to boost his ratings before elections next March ([EURASIA REVIEW](#))



## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Ukraine declares 30 day martial law along borders with Russia and Black Sea.

26.11.2018. Ukraine voted to introduce martial law for 30 days after the Russian military opened fire on three of its ships over the weekend. (CNBC) <https://goo.gl/WGroZS> (RFERL) <https://goo.gl/rtrcbFB>

### 2. EU's Tusk: Europe will stay united in support of Ukraine.

26.11.2018. European Council President Donald Tusk on Monday condemned Russia's seizure of Ukrainian navy vessels in the Kerch Strait. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/okU2Ry>

### 3. The NATO-Ukraine Commission convenes extraordinarily.

26.11.2018. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg "we call on Russia to ensure unhindered access to Ukrainian ports and allow freedom of navigation for Ukraine in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. There is no justification for the use of military force against Ukrainian ships and naval personnel. So we call on Russia to release immediately the Ukrainian sailors and ships it seized yesterday. And we call for calm and restraint. (NATO) <https://goo.gl/Tf5K9v>

### 4. UN urges Russia and Ukraine to step away from further confrontation at sea.

26.11.2018. An "immediate de-escalation" of tensions is needed in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, the UN top political official has said, underlining the importance of "earnest attempts" to find a peaceful resolution to years of simmering conflict between Russia and Ukraine. (UN) <https://goo.gl/85wrXg>

### 5. Declaration by the High Rep on behalf of the EU on the escalating tensions.

28.11.2018. The EU expresses its utmost concern about the dangerous increase of tensions in the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait in recent days which has led to the seizure of Ukrainian vessels and their crews by Russia and shots being fired at them, wounding several Ukrainian servicemen. We are dismayed at this use of force by Russia which, against the backdrop of increasing militarisation in the area, is unacceptable. (EU) <https://goo.gl/Z4bvhl>

### 6. Ukraine shows on a map: Ukrainian ships were attacked & seized by Russia in neutral waters.

28.11.2018. Ukraine shared a map showing that Ukrainian ships were attacked, seized by Russia in neutral waters. (Ukrainian Embassy to UK) <https://goo.gl/6Paz3P>

### 7. Poroshenko hopes NATO deploying ships to Sea of Azov.

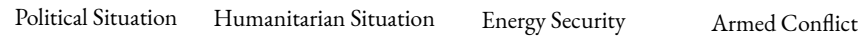
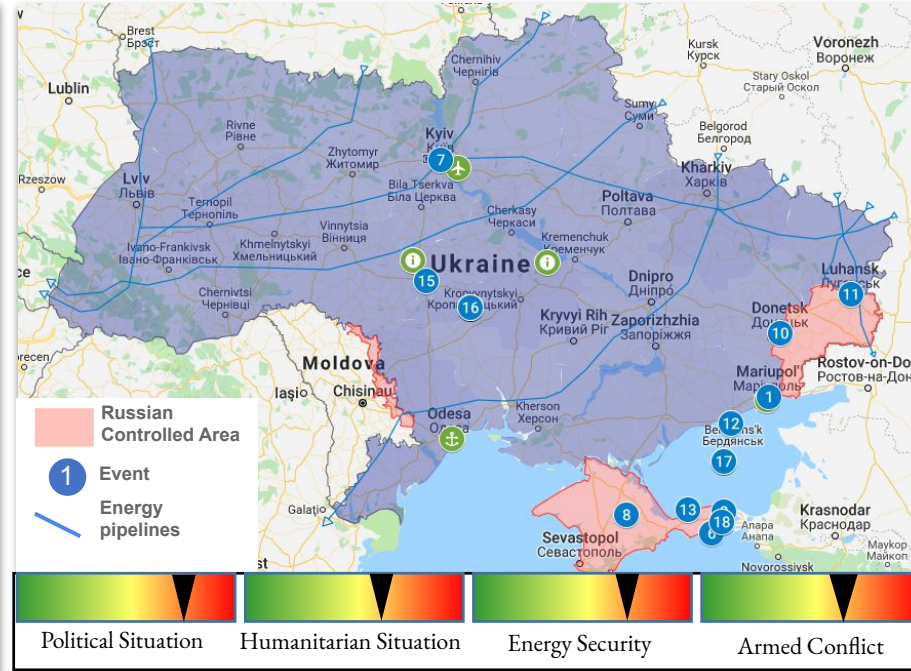
29.11.2018. President of Ukraine has called on NATO to send some of its naval vessels to the Sea of Azov to help Ukraine restore security following Russia's act of aggression in the Kerch Strait. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/YWc2Ft>

### 8. Russia to build new radar station in Crimea, boosting cover of its southwest.

29.11.2018. Moscow is set to start building a new cutting-edge radar station in Crimea in place of a deprecated Soviet-era one. The facility will significantly boost Russia's capabilities in detecting and tracking missiles and other objects. (RT) <https://goo.gl/nyCnVZ>

### 9. Ukraine bans Russian men aged 16 to 60 from entry.

30.11.2018. Ukraine will restrict the entry of Russian men aged between 16 and 60 in an effort to prevent Russia from forming "private armies" on its soil, President Petro Poroshenko said Friday, citing fears of an invasion similar to Russia's seizure and annexation of Crimea. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/1dhPg2>



## ASSESSMENT

- With this attack, not only tensions between Russia and Ukraine have reached their most dangerous moment, but the dispute could also become a major test for NATO, US, and the EU as well. The last incident reveals that a weak response to that would give Russia the assurance to carry out similar aggressive actions in the future.
- Russia has demonstrated that it will not let Ukraine and its supporters to build its naval base and increase its military capabilities in the Sea of Azov. The Sea of Azov is likely to turn into a maritime conflict zone between Ukraine and Russia.
- The escalation of the tensions in the maritime domain will likely continue in addition to the land domain in Eastern Ukraine. Both parties will also likely to keep raising their military build-up in the region. Western – particularly the U.S – support will be crucial for Ukrainian military reinforcement.
- The highest risk is the escalation of this clash into a broader military confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. Ukraine's considerably less naval power in the region compared to Russia decreases the possibility of such a wider escalation.
- Seeing the continuation of the current Ukraine leadership as the justification of the statement of "the war will continue", Russian President Putin seems to turn the Ukraine's presidential election into a target, which is slated for March 2019. In the next months, Hybrid Warfare practices are likely to concentrate on decreasing Ukraine President's value in public.

### 10. Germany unveils strategy to bring peace to Ukraine.

01.12.2018. The strategy includes the implementation of the Minsk agreements, preventing the violation of international law, the need to strengthen and protect the OSCE mission, the deployment of UN peacekeepers and support for reforms in Ukraine. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/aK2BFT>

### 11. Ukraine's government divides country by declaring martial law, Putin says.

02.12.2018. Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that by declaring martial law in the country's ten regions, the Ukrainian government has divided the country into two (TASS) <https://goo.gl/7URRCx>

### 12. Merkel, Putin agree to more four-way talks on Kerch Strait tension.

02.12.2018. Germany, France, Ukraine and Russia will hold further talks at the advisor level about a shipping standoff in the Kerch Strait, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said on Saturday, urging Moscow to let Ukrainian vessels enter the Sea of Azov. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/ITmB7M>

### 13. Putin refuses to release Ukrainian sailors and ships.

02.12.2018. Russian president says it is 'too early' in investigation to consider a prisoner swap and accuses Ukraine government of provocation. (The GUARDIAN) <https://goo.gl/NGKQrB>

## OPINIONS

### 14. Russia Openly Attacks Ukraine. Why Now?

27.11.2018. One possibility is that the Kremlin is aiming to reinforce its control over the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea region. Russia will use the escalation in the Azov Sea to prove to the West that it's still powerful, and also to test Ukraine's reaction. (ATLANTIC COUNCIL) <https://goo.gl/N4WHXK>

### 15. The Azov Crisis and Martial Law in Ukraine.

28.11.2018. The situation which evolved in the Ukrainian-Russian conflict and the region in general continues to contain a huge explosive potential which, if combined with several circumstances, can lead to the restoration of a full-fledged conflict. (ICPS) <https://goo.gl/8tKkiL>

### 16. A major escalation in tensions between Russia-Ukraine: What is next?

28.11.2018. The escalation of the tensions in the maritime domain will likely continue in addition to the land domain in Eastern Ukraine. Both parties will also likely to keep raising their military buildup in the region. (BEHORIZON) <https://goo.gl/2yvjXM>

### 17. How to deter the emboldened Russian president.

30.11.2018. Diplomatically, the U.S., NATO, the EU, and other western allies should not only condemn the Russian actions but also detail how they violate specific international conventions. There should be demands that Russia apologize, punish those responsible, and immediately release the Ukrainian sailors. (CNBC) <https://goo.gl/upc5La>

### 18. Investigating the Kerch Strait incident.

30.11.2018. Firstly, Ukrainian ships did enter Russian-claimed territorial waters, both that of Crimea and mainland Russia in the Kerch Strait. Ukraine nonetheless argues this was legally permissible due to the 2003 agreement between the two countries. Secondly, we can say that the Ukrainian tug 'Yani Kapu' was intentionally rammed at least four times over a period of at least an hour. Thirdly, based on information provided by the Russian FSB which appears to incriminate themselves, the shooting of the 'Berdyansk' most likely took place in international waters. (BELLINGCAT) <https://goo.gl/7pY6I8>





### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. EU Foreign Affairs Council reiterated unwavering support for and commitment to Ukraine.

19.11.2018. The Council recalled that the EU does not recognise the "elections" of 11 November 2018 that it considers as illegal and illegitimate. They affirmed their readiness to consider appropriate targeted measures in response. (EU) <https://goo.gl/GF5gMy>

#### 2. Russia warns Ukraine against attempts to revise Sea of Azov status.

22.11.2018. Russia warns Ukraine against attempts to revise the current status of the Sea of Azov as they run counter to international law, the Russian Foreign Ministry said. (TASS) <https://goo.gl/4ursZS>

#### 3. British troop deployment to Ukraine likely to play into Kremlin's hands.

22.11.2018. The Ministry of Defence (MoD) confirmed an unspecified number of British forces would be sent to train Ukrainian special forces and marines early next year. These add to the 100 personnel currently in the country. (INDEPENDENT) <https://goo.gl/FgtwNq>

#### 4. NATO calls Russian aggression in Ukraine biggest threat to Alliance.

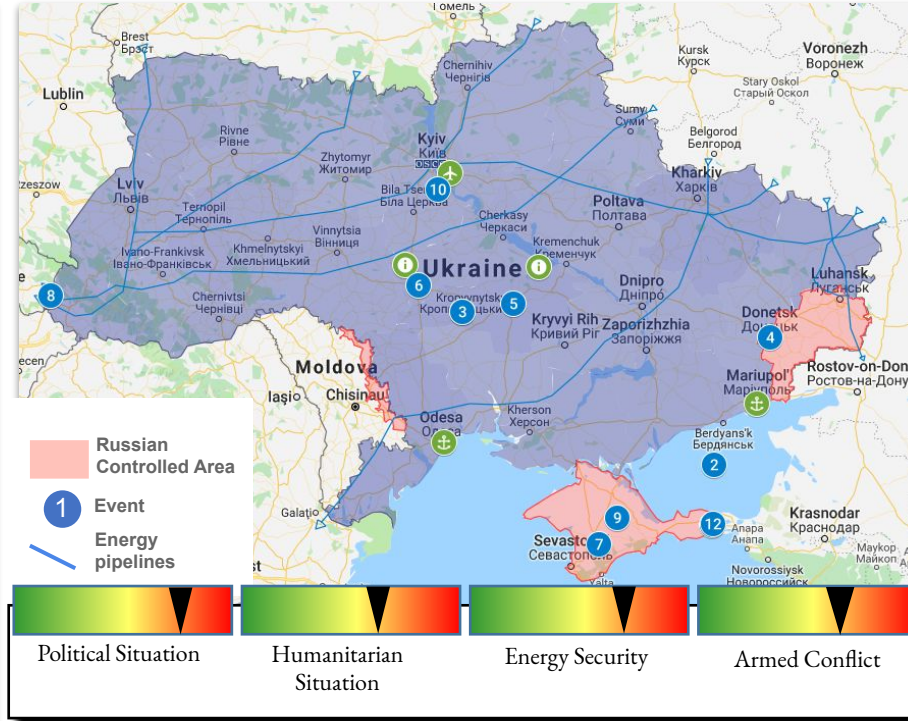
23.11.2018. Rose Gottemoeller, NATO Deputy Secretary General, called Russian aggression in Ukraine and extremism in the Middle East the biggest threats the Alliance is facing. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/Dvvtxd>

#### 5. Rada to consider laws on state language, decommunization by year's end.

23.11.2018. The Verkhovna Rada's chairman Andriy Parubiy has said the Ukrainian parliament will consider laws on state language and decommunization by this year's close. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/ZoJ5uu>

#### 6. Media: Gas supplies via Turkish Stream will go through Hungary and Slovakia bypassing Ukraine.

23.11.2018. The Russian gas monopoly Gazprom chose its gas supplies' route to Europe along the second Turkish Stream line. It will go through Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary and Slovakia, reported the Russian newspaper Kommersant. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/R9Q78N>



### ASSESSMENT

- Raising eyebrows with the statement of commitment for more troops and the deployment of a Royal Navy ship to Ukraine, UK defence secretary Gavin Williamson reflects the idea of likely support of UK particularly in military. Assertively implying as "As long as Ukraine faces Russian hostilities, it will find a steadfast partner in the United Kingdom", it seems that Russia would in mid-term face reactions in Ukraine issue as long as it pursues the current politics.
- Russian seizure of Ukrainian navy ships in the Kerch Strait by military force escalated the political tensions between in the Sea of Azov. By doing so, Russia aims likely to hinder Ukrainian efforts to revise the status of Sea of Azov and Ukrainian military build-up in Azov with Western support.

#### 7. Moscow doesn't accept Kiev's protest over Putin's trip to Crimea.

23.11.2018. Moscow does not accept Kiev's protests over President Vladimir Putin's trip to Crimea, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov said on Friday. "We don't accept this protest," he told. (TASS) <https://goo.gl/zStu1H>

#### 8. Kyiv not going to ask Budapest how Ukrainian laws should be interpreted on Ukrainian territory – Klimkin.

23.11.2018. "We are not discussing with the Hungarian side how Ukrainian laws should be interpreted on Ukrainian territory. This is and many other important issues will be discussed at consular consultations in Kyiv on November 28". (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/Fxeomf>

#### 9. Putin's visits will not make Crimea Russian - Poroshenko.

24.11.2018. Commenting on Putin's trip to Crimea for an extensive meeting of the State Council Presidium of the Russian Federation Ukrainian, Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko stated that Putin's visits to Crimea will not make the peninsular Russian. "We consider these Russian president's visits as a gross violation of international law". (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/QVYvMR>

#### 10. Ukraine grateful to Latvia for assistance in security sector reform – Poroshenko.

24.11.2018. Ukraine is grateful to Latvia for its help in reforming the security sector, President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko has said. "I also noted the assistance of Latvia in reforming the security sector of Ukraine and bringing it closer to NATO standards". (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/Ybj3VT>

#### 11. Russia fires at Ukrainian ships and captures three vessels off Crimea.

25.11.2018. Russia has opened fire on Ukrainian ships and captured three vessels in a major escalation of tensions off the coast of Crimea. Three sailors have been wounded after the Ukrainian navy said two artillery boats were hit by the strikes in the Black Sea. Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko called an emergency session of his war cabinet and has asked parliament to vote on whether to impose martial law on the country for 60 days. (SKY NEWS) <https://goo.gl/NN7hpe>

#### 12. Tension escalates after Russia seizes Ukraine naval ships.

25.11.2018. Each country blames the other for the incident. On Monday Ukrainian MPs are due to vote on declaring martial law. The crisis began when Russia accused the Ukrainian ships of illegally entering its waters. The Russians placed a tanker under a bridge in the Kerch Strait - the only access to the Sea of Azov, which is shared between the two countries. (BBC) <https://goo.gl/t3CU1z>



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Poroshenko, Merkel, Macron discuss peacekeepers' introduction to Donbas.

12.11.2018. Ukraine's President Petro Poroshenko met with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron to discuss an introduction of peacekeepers to the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/XbZozX>

#### 2. Russia to work with any new administration in Ukraine, says Putin.

15.11.2018. According to Putin, the current authorities in Kiev are unable to do something to resolve the situation in southeastern Ukraine. "As long as such people remain in power in Kiev, we can hardly count on a peaceful solution to the issues in these territories," he said. However, there is no alternative to peace talks, the Russian leader pointed out. (TASS) <https://goo.gl/N4juFB>

#### 3. Separatist leader in Eastern Ukraine vows closer Russia integration after 'sham' polls.

15.11.2018. The newly elected leader of an area controlled by Moscow-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine has promised closer integration with Russia. (RFE/RL) <https://goo.gl/pWkSmL>

#### 4. Putin: Meeting in 'Normandy format' before elections in Ukraine makes no sense.

15.11.2018. Vladimir Putin has stated at a press conference in Singapore that there is no point in holding a new meeting of the "Normandy Four" in the current situation in Ukraine. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/7kzFr>

#### 5. Klimkin, Volker agree on steps to counter Russia's attempts to legitimize occupation.

16.11.2018. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Pavlo Klimkin met with Kurt Volker during his working visit to the U.S. The parties have discussed the further steps towards countering Russian aggression (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/VvYgZh>

#### 6. UN General Assembly committee approves resolution on Crimea.

16.11.2018. UN General Assembly approved the Ukraine-led resolution which condemns alleged human rights violations in the region using the terms "annexation" and "occupation." (TASS) <https://goo.gl/5Y2GgT>



### ASSESSMENT

*Russia's candidates were selected without surprise in the so-called elections in Donbas. With that Russian manual control will likely go on. Western reactions to the elections were as predicted. A stalemate in the peace process seems inevitable.*

*Reluctant to hold a meeting in the "Normandy format" during the election campaign, Russia seems not to allow Ukraine's current government to gain leverage of diplomatic efforts reflecting moderate policy.*

*The upcoming elections in Ukraine (31 March 2019) will likely be a testing ground for the West in terms with the Russian meddling into Western democracies and elections.*

*Meeting with Merkel and Macron to discuss an "introduction of peacekeepers" to the occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, Ukraine's President Poroshenko seems to rely on a "peacekeeping mission". Having a potential to ensure the safety component of the Minsk agreements, a UN Mission to Donbas is likely to come into fashion in the upcoming days.*

#### 7. Elections staged in Ukraine's East under Russian control.

15.11.2018. The DPR's "interim acting head," Denis Pushilin, is credited with 61 percent of the votes cast (the remainder being shared by four also-rans). Pushilin's political organization, Donetsk Republic, is attributed 72 percent of the votes cast in the "parliamentary" election, versus 26 percent to the Free Donbas group. (Jamestown) <https://goo.gl/7eJafX>

#### 8. More than 36 countries condemn Donbas poll — head of UK delegation to OSCE.

16.11.2018. "Special OSCE Permanent Council discusses yesterday's illegal, illegitimate 'elections' in Donetsk and Luhansk regions: EU 28, Canada, US, Turkey, Switzerland, Norway, Georgia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, and others condemn violation of international law, Ukraine sovereignty and the Minsk agreements". (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/pvhR8z>

#### 9. U.S., Ukraine coordinate efforts aimed at stopping construction of Nord Stream 2, TurkStream.

17.11.2018. The United States and Ukraine stressed the importance of continued coordination to stop the construction of Russian pipelines, in particular, Nord Stream 2 and the second line of Turkish Stream. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/CVQjkD>

#### 10. Why Russian sanctions won't work against Ukraine.

18.11.2018. RF introduced special economic measures in respect of a number of Ukrainian nationals and legal entities. In particular, sanctions included the blocking of non-cash funds, non-documentary securities and property on the territory of the Russian Federation. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/3idMUK>

### OPINIONS

#### 11. The Kremlin is winning.

12.11.2018. Ukraine is a victim of both the Russian System's struggle for survival and the West's inability to protect the international legal space. For the West, ending this confrontation may prove to be even more agonizing than ending the Cold War. (BROOKINGS) <https://goo.gl/5bOggh>

#### 12. How we are exposing foreign interference in Ukraine's elections

15.11.2018. Western democracies are under threat from outside meddling, and Ukraine is the testing ground for this interference. (ATLANTIC COUNCIL) <https://goo.gl/8chyEy>





### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Black Sea border cooperation Forum starts in Odessa, Russia not invited.

07.11.2018. In Odessa/Ukraine, Forum of the Black Sea Border Cooperation has started, in which, the leaders of the border and coast security of the coastal states of the regions, including Ukraine, Turkey, Romania, Georgia, and Bulgaria participate. Russia was not invited due to the non-observance of its commitments and violation of the norms of the international law. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/2qexen>

#### 2. Russia trying to seize larger areas in Donbas - Ukraine envoy to int'l organizations.

08.11.2018. Ukraine's Representative to the OSCE and UN in Vienna, Ihor Prokopchuk, addressing the OSCE Permanent Council on Thursday said Russia was attempting to seize more territory in Ukraine amid their ongoing violations of Minsk agreements that had been designed to provide a peaceful settlement to the Donbas conflict. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/kbW3vd>

#### 3. U.S. imposes new sanctions on Russia for Crimea, investments.

08.11.2018. The United States on Thursday imposed sanctions on two Ukrainians, a Russian officer and nine entities for Moscow's annexation of Crimea and profiting from the occupation, the U.S. Treasury said. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/fK56UQ>

#### 4. Russia stalling talks between Volker, Surkov – U.S. Mission to OSCE.

09.11.2018. "The United States greatly appreciates the efforts of France and Germany in the Normandy Format to push for implementation of the Minsk agreements. Unfortunately, Russia continues to impede the peace process and is stalling talks between Special Representative Volker and Russian Presidential Advisor Vladislav Surkov," Acting Deputy Chief of the U.S. Mission to the OSCE Gregory Macris said. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/XXNTtu>

#### 5. Ukrainian politician: Russia offered to 'solve' Donbas problem in exchange for Crimea.

09.11.2018. Yevhen Marchuk, Ukraine's representative in the security subgroup of the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG), told reporters that in other work groups he receives offers to deal with the situation in the Donbas by Ukraine officially renouncing its claims to annexed Crimea. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/9ETOQ4>



### ASSESSMENT

*Enabling and supporting so-called elections in occupied areas of Donbas, Russia seems to be in defiance to the efforts in line with Minsk Agreement, and the peace talks in Normandy format and Trilateral Contact Group as well. Hereafter, it is highly probable that Russia will proceed to face more economic sanctions. Naturally, Ukraine seems to take advantage of Russia's illegal and illegitimate attempt in Donbas with regards to cornering Russia in the international arena.*

*Underlining "the support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders", both EU and NATO are likely not to change their "attitudes and behaviours" towards Russia.*

#### 6. 'Demonstrative political revenge': Russia dismissive as US announces new round of Crimea sanctions.

09.11.2018. Russian officials shrugged off the new US sanctions against several resorts and individuals in Crimea, calling them insignificant, impotent and acts of petty politics. A Crimean official even thanked the US for free advertising. Russia's political response to the latest round of sanctions will mirror the US, while in economic terms will be measured to ensure that the retaliation does not hurt Russia's interests, according to Konstantin Kosachev, the chair of the Russian Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee. (RT) <https://goo.gl/TXd1UN>

#### 7. Response to Russia's actions in Donbas will be strengthening of sanctions, - MFA Head.

10.11.2018. According to Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Ukraine and its international partners are working to strengthen sanctions against Russia because of the "elections" in the occupied territories of Donbas (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/86Wcga>

#### 8. Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the "elections" planned in the so-called "Luhansk People's Republic" and "Donetsk People's Republic" for 11 November 2018.

10.11.2018. The European Union reiterates its full support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union recalls that the implementation of the Minsk agreements by all sides remains key to reaching a sustainable political solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine, and underlines the responsibility of the Russian Federation in this regard. (EUROPEAN COUNCIL) <https://goo.gl/5RRDGq>

#### 9. Statement by the NATO Spokesperson on the reported elections in eastern Ukraine.

11.11.2018. NATO does not recognise the reported elections held on 11 November in the self-proclaimed and unrecognised "Luhansk People's Republic" and "Donetsk People's Republic." They run contrary to the letter and spirit of the Minsk Agreements and undermine efforts towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict. (NATO OFFICIAL WEBSITE) <https://goo.gl/ZSEBSu>

#### 10. Fake local elections under way in Russian-occupied Donbas

11.11.2018. 408 "polling stations" in "DPR"-controlled districts and 316 stations in "LPR"-controlled areas opened on 11 Nov. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/Nasr9U>



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Russia to construct defensive ring near Sochi if Ukraine, Georgia enters NATO.

29.10.2018. The possible entrance of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO will become a major military and economic problem for Russia and will force to construct the defensive ring in the area of Sochi. The Russian diplomat noted that with such scenario, Russia 'will be forced to construct the defensive echelons at the border with Ukraine.' (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/7sEkLW>

#### 2. Tymoshenko announces creation of War Cabinet.

30.10.2018. Yuliya Tymoshenko, leader of the All-Ukrainian union Batkivshchyna (Fatherland) party, has announced that they have started the formation of a War Cabinet whose composition will be made public closer to the presidential elections. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/DafGDA>

#### 3. By denouncing Azov treaty with Russia, Ukraine likely to get into new territorial dispute.

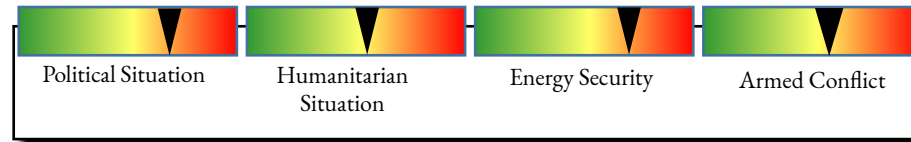
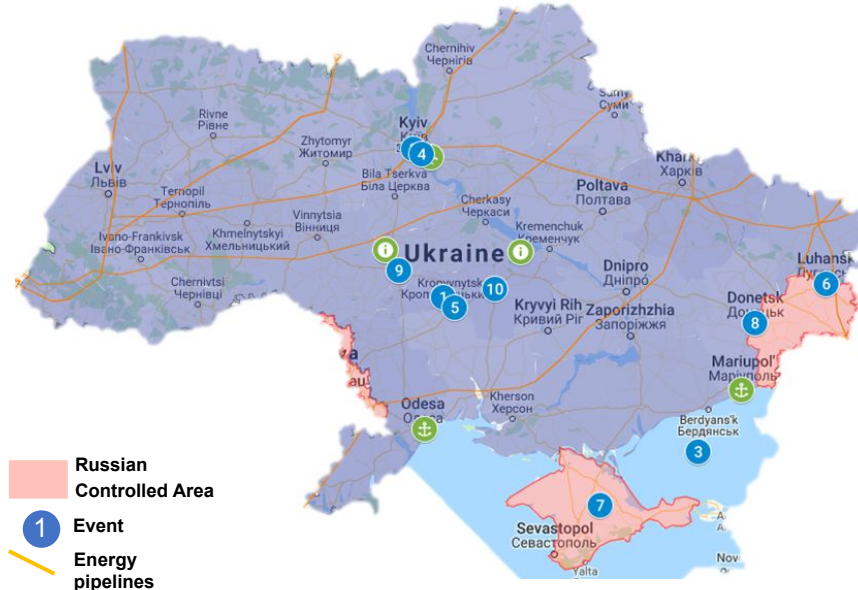
30.10.2018. The denunciation of the 2003 treaty between Russia and Ukraine on cooperation in using the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait may lead to a new territorial dispute involving the delimitation of the Sea of Azov, Olena Zerkal, Ukraine's Deputy Foreign Minister for European Integration, has announced. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/NjmEv6>

#### 4. EU8 members of the UN Security Council joint statement on Ukraine.

30.10.2018. We as Member States of the European Union fully support the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within the internationally recognised borders. If held, these illegitimate "elections" would contravene commitments made under the Minsk agreements and violate Ukrainian law. (GOV.UK) <https://goo.gl/TbK7nI>

#### 5. A 'global conspiracy' undermines Orthodox world – head of Russian Church.

30.10.2018. There is a global conspiracy against Orthodox Christianity. Moscow's ongoing quarrel with Constantinople over Ukraine is just a symptom. Patriarch Kirill alluded to a global conspiracy against Orthodox Christianity as the cause of the ongoing rift between his church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. (RT) <https://goo.gl/1E6vuj>



### ASSESSMENT

*After the statement of Russian Foreign Minister claiming that "Russia will not allow the NATO vessels to enter the Sea of Azov for the participation in the joint drills with Ukraine", it is likely that the Sea of Azov would be a crucial part of Russia's execution area of Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD).*

*Seeing the possible membership of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO as grounds for major military and economic problem for Russia and for constructing the defensive ring in the area of Sochi, may be considered as "corroborative" of A2AD policy.*

*Voicing opposition to interference in Ukraine's internal affairs by "any external forces", China seems to pursue a balance policy calling for the implementation of UNSC Resolution 2202 and the Minsk II agreement.*

#### 6. Russia, Western Powers clash at UN over elections in Eastern Ukraine.

31.10.2018. Russia has clashed with the United States and European powers at the United Nations over the legality of elections in areas of eastern Ukraine held by Moscow-backed separatists. During debate on the planned elections in Donetsk and Luhansk on November 11, the UN's political chief said she backed the Western view that the votes would violate a 2015 accord laying out steps for settling the conflict in eastern Ukraine. (RFE/RL) <https://goo.gl/vGi6TG>

#### 7. China calls for measures to decrease tensions in Ukraine.

31.10.2018. Voicing opposition to interference in Ukraine's internal affairs by any external forces, Wu Haitao, China's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, called for the comprehensive implementation of Resolution 2202 (2015) and the Minsk II agreement regarding the resolution of conflict in Ukraine. (XINHUANET) <https://goo.gl/o3MgyU>

### OPINIONS

#### 8. Russia's Roadmap to Exiting Ukraine.

30.10.2018. When Russia realizes its approach in Ukraine has failed, here's how it can get out. One possible path has emerged after negotiations between U.S. envoy Kurt Volker and Kremlin aide Vladislav Surkov, bolstered by numerous analyses by policy specialist. (THE MOSCOW TIMES) <https://goo.gl/ccCH9P>

#### 9. How Realistic Are Ukraine's Chances of NATO Membership?.

30.10.2018. Ukraine recently affirmed its EU and NATO membership aspirations by introducing amendments to the constitution. And while the prospect of Ukraine joining the EU is especially unclear, the situation is slightly different, according to the new President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. (HROMADSKIE INTERNATIONAL) <https://goo.gl/17bAX2>

#### 10. NATO membership for Ukraine & Georgia would bring out the bear in Russia.

02.11.2018. Western leaders argue that the growth of NATO along Russia's border together with the militarization of Eastern Europe is necessary for preserving peace with Moscow. (RT) <https://goo.gl/3PYgn5>

#### 11. Blue Helmets in Donbas?

11.2018. A phased and sequenced scenario to unlock the Minsk Agreements and restore peace in Ukraine. (UPEACE Centre The Hague) <https://goo.gl/iilwur>





## KEY EVENTS

### 1. New Russian counter-sanctions against Kiev.

23.10.2018. Prime Minister Medvedev announced that hundreds of Ukrainian citizens, who “brought harm” to Russia’s interests, including businessmen and some “celebrities,” will be blacklisted in the shortest term. Moscow’s counter-sanctions against Kiev won’t affect the common people in Ukraine, presidential press-secretary assured. (RT) <https://goo.gl/YKbVz3>

### 2. Donbas residents warm to the idea of reintegration.

23.10.2018. Ukrainian citizens on both sides of the demarcation line have become more tolerant toward the idea of reintegrating Donbas under Ukrainian government control, according to the data obtained by Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index. (Hromadske Int) <https://goo.gl/e4hPbT>

### 3. European Parliament resolution on the situation in Sea of Azov

24.10.2018. “It would be very useful to appoint an EU Special Envoy for Crimea and the Donbass region, whose responsibilities would also cover the Sea of Azov” (EP) <https://goo.gl/fPXXmA>

### 4. Hungary to unblock Ukraine-NATO commission after restoration of Hungarians’ rights in Transcarpathia.

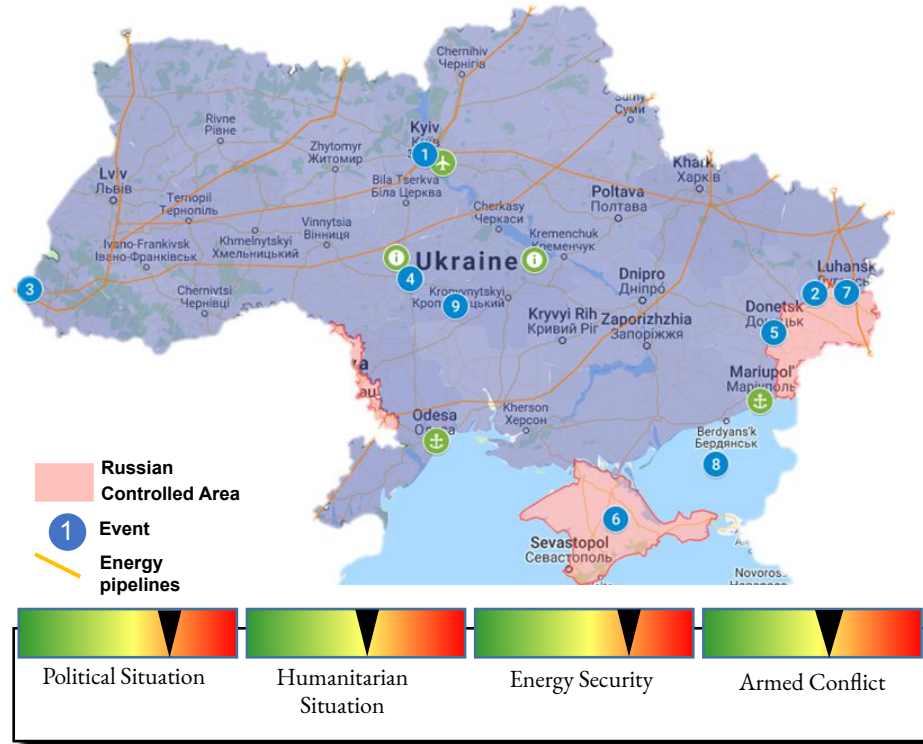
25.10.2018. Hungary will lift its ban on the next session of the Ukraine-NATO Commission under the condition that Ukraine, among other things, restores the rights of Hungarians living in Transcarpathia to obtain an education in their native tongue. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/KzkYVr>

### 5. President of Belarus offers Ukraine assistance in resolving the conflict in the Donbas.

27.10.2018. Speaking at the Forum of the Regions of Ukraine and Belarus in Gomel, President of Belarus Lukashenko has expressed willingness to help Ukraine in resolving the conflict in the Donbas. He stressed that Belarus is ready to work only within the framework of an agreement between Ukraine and Russia. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/UsjA6w>

### 6. Ukraine demands Russia stop recruiting Crimeans to its army.

27.10.2018. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry protested the ongoing recruitment of Crimean residents to the Russian army. “Such actions are a blatant violation of the obligations according to the International Humanitarian law.” (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/LKUnsg>



## ASSESSMENT

- In response to EU sanctions and banning of several Russian media outlets and TV channels by Ukrainian authorities, Putin signs a decree allowing Russian counter-sanctions against Ukraine. Using the narrative “sanction won’t target common citizens” in the decree, it is assessed that Russia is trying to disrupt the integrity of Ukraine, which is one of the core elements of “Hybrid Warfare” implemented by Russia that discriminates people to be easily manipulated.
- In case of continuation of “sanctions showdown”, it is likely that more serious confrontations spill over into Sea of Azov increasing the tension.
- While Ukraine is strengthening its defensive forces in the Sea of Azov with Western support, it is very unlikely that the Russian advantage will be balanced. Kiev can only count on deterring Russia, both by reinforcement of its naval forces and diplomatic efforts of the EU and the US.

### 7. Volker supports European Parliament’s idea to appoint EU special envoy for Donbas and Crimea.

27.10.2018. I think this is a wonderful idea. I met with members of the European Parliament about two weeks ago. I urged them to continue keeping Donbas and Crimea in the focus of their attention, Volker said. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/kHAAa5>

## OPINIONS

### 8. Rising tension in the Sea of Azov

24.10.2018. Kiev deploys subsequent vessels in the Sea of Azov and strengthens the defensive forces of the coast. The issue was also discussed by the European Parliament. However, it is rather unlikely that the alarmist speech given by Federica Mogherini will produce a result expected by Kiev: new sanctions against Russia. (Warsaw Institute) <https://goo.gl/m8kvLW>

### 9. Shaky alliance in support of Ukraine.

26.10.2018. The more time passes since the start of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the more our international partners, demonstrating in words their support for Kyiv, are trying to flirt with Moscow. Each EU country has its own reasons. But these “personal ambitions” can play a cruel joke on them, and on us. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/p3Lh4p>

### 10. Showdown in the Sea of Azov? Why tensions are growing between Ukraine and Russia.

25.10.2018. Russian reports discuss Ukraine’s apparent plan to build a new naval base at Berdyansk about thirty miles west of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov. Any glance at the map reveals that all ships transiting into the Sea of Azov, whether Russian or Ukrainian or flying other flags, must transit the Kerch Strait and thus pass under Russia’s new bridge that was completed earlier this year. (National Interest) <https://goo.gl/B4YdNm>

### 11. What’s wrong with Ukraine banning two propaganda channels?

26.10.2018. Ukraine could soon ban two Ukrainian channels, NewsOne and 112, which are widely considered channels spreading Russian propaganda. While some have cheered the step, others are questioning in what way it was done and whether it will help in the long run. (Euromaidan Press) <https://goo.gl/kp4T2Q>



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Crimea college attack: student carries out mass shooting in Kerch

17.10.2018. At least 19 people have been killed and almost 40 wounded in a shooting carried out by a student at a vocational college in Kerch, Crimea. (THE GUARDIAN) <https://goo.gl/CZsgPF>

#### 2. Crimean blast can be used as reason for war in Sea of Azov.

18.10.2018. Ukraine's Interior Ministry speaker claimed that he will be surprised if there is no connection with "Ukrainian nationalists" or "ISIS Tatars" in the case. The blast in Kerch can be connected by the law enforcers of occupied Crimea with the "Ukrainian trail." In future it can be used by Russia as a reason for the war in the Sea of Azov or even the invasion as Ukraine's Interior Ministry speaker reported. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/rx9R1K>

#### 3. Russia refuses to call off Donbas 'elections'.

18.10.2018. Russia has refused to call off the elections scheduled for 11 November in the occupied territories of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk provinces, said Oleksandr Motsyk, Ukraine's representative to the Trilateral Contact Group (TCG). According to the Ukrainian official, the likelihood that "elections" will be held in the DPR and LPR is at 99%. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/flfYH>

#### 4. Russia's top diplomat warns Ukraine won't be able to hold NATO drills in Azov Sea.

18.10.2018. Owing to a bilateral treaty signed by Kiev and Moscow, Ukraine won't be able to hold joint NATO drills in the Sea of Azov because this will require Russia's consent, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said in an interview with RT France, Paris Match and Figaro on Thursday. "Now Ukraine wants to hold NATO drills in the Sea of Azov but it will be impossible to go there because our treaty with Ukraine requires mutual consent for the passage of warships into the Sea of Azov," Russia's top diplomat specified. (TASS) <https://goo.gl/cLxMLn>

#### 5. Hungary escalating tensions with Ukraine, playing along with Russia.

18.10.2018. After the shocking video was released revealing a scene where Ukrainians in the Hungarian Consulate in Zakarpattia's Berehove were issued Hungarian passports and instructed to conceal the fact before the Ukrainian authorities, Peter Szijjarto, Hungary's top diplomat, chose a tactic of escalating the confrontation. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/IjqN24>



### ASSESSMENT

- *With the intention of facilitating a diplomatic resolution to the war in the Donbass region, The Trilateral Contact Group (TCG) on Ukraine has held its 97th round of negotiations. But still it seems to be a deadlock.*
- *After the assassination of DPR leader Alexandr Zakharchenko on 31 Aug 2018, elections was scheduled for the leaders of the DPR and LPR on 11 Nov 2018. Putting aside diplomatic solutions, the claim of Russia on elections in Donbas region may bring about "freeze" in the conflict. Considering the stance of EU and US against Russia, a potential election in Donbas may trigger new sanctions and increase the tensions.*

#### 6. Freedom of worship? US encourages Ukraine to create independent Orthodox Church.

20.10.2018. Washington has voiced "strong support" for an autocephalous Orthodox community in Ukraine, while the Russian Orthodox Church has accused the Constantinople Patriarchate of betraying its faith to cater to US political interests. While the Russian government has refused to intervene in Church affairs, Washington, which has little to do with the Orthodox world, reiterated "its strong support" for Ukraine's Orthodox community "to govern their religion according to their beliefs, free of outside interference." (RT) <https://goo.gl/yWB7xy>

#### 7. Russia not taking steps to implement Minsk agreements - U.S. Assistant Secretary.

20.10.2018. Russia is not taking steps to implement the Minsk agreements regarding the situation in Donbas, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Kirsten Madison has said. She said at a briefing at the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine (NABU) on Friday that everyone hopes that this conflict, which has claimed numerous human lives and caused a lot of sufferings, will end soon. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/TWHnjT>

### OPINIONS

#### 8. Putin may try to launch new offensive in Ukraine and absorb Belarus to stop Autocephaly.

16.10.2018. The decision of Universal Patriarch of Constantinople Bartholomew I to move toward granting autocephaly to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (see EDM, September 13) is an existential threat to Russia's President Vladimir Putin and his conception of a "Russian World" ("Russkiy Mir"). For one thing, the decision on Ukraine has already led Constantinople to also reject Moscow's claims to having Belarus and Moldova as part of its canonical territory. (EURASIA DAILY MONITOR) <https://goo.gl/rvhbn>

#### 9. Russians and Ukrainians not 'A Divided People' but two separate Slavic Nations.

17.10.2018. However much Vladimir Putin insists otherwise, Aleksandr Tsipko says, Russians and Ukrainians "are not a divided nation." They are instead two different Slavic peoples who over the course of many centuries have lived separately, who have not only different languages and who have different spiritual worlds and geopolitical preferences." (EURASIA REVIEW) <https://goo.gl/rBD2cq>





### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Sanctions in PACE should be maintained until Russia corrects violation of PACE's principles.

08.10.2018. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine recalls that sanctions against the Russian delegation in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) should be maintained until Moscow fully complies with the principles of the Council of Europe and the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/XvddVr>

#### 2. Ukraine to create new border guard squad on Russian border.

10.10.2018. The Cabinet of Ministers, Ukraine's government, has approved the creation of a budget institution "Shostka Border Squad of the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine." (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/7kHoLy>

#### 3. Hungary protests Ukrainian military moves, 'Death List'.

11.10.2018. A diplomatic spat between Hungary and Ukraine has escalated, with Budapest summoning Kyiv's ambassador to protest what it called a "death list" targeting ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine as well as military movements on their common border. (RFE/RL) <https://goo.gl/p5YDRU>

#### 4. Ukraine is dangerously close to a religious war.

11.10.2018. Putin's political military clash with Ukr. has brought about a schism on a spiritual level. Ukrainian part of the Orthodox Church is on the verge of breaking away from its Russian overseer. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/QZtfBv>

#### 5. Patriarchate grants Autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine.

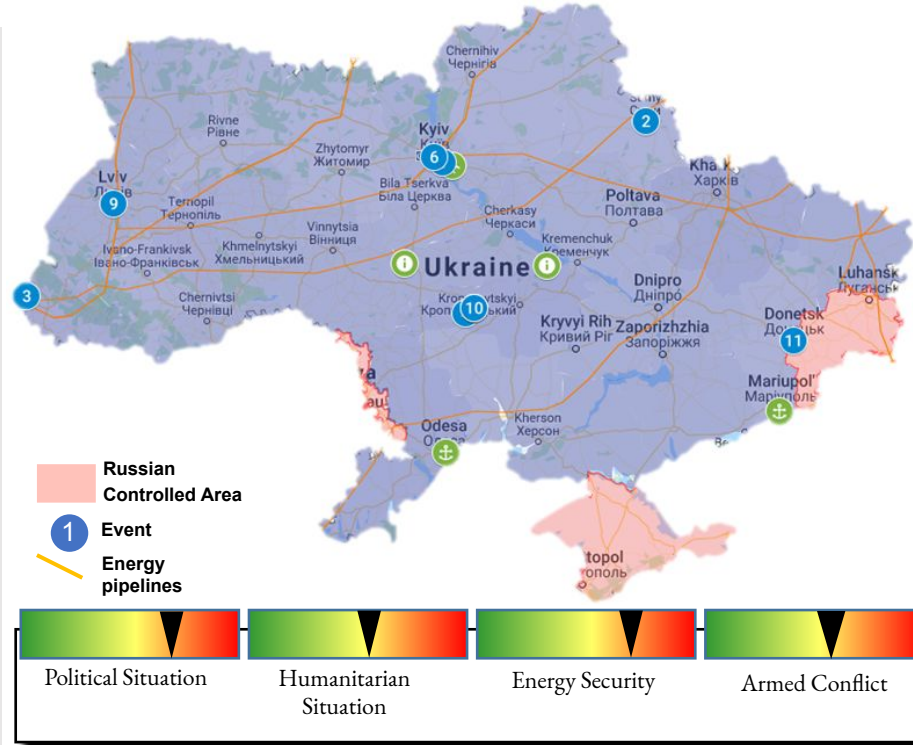
11.10.2018. The Ecumenical Patriarchate proceed to the granting of Autocephaly to the Church of Ukraine. (Patriarchate) <https://goo.gl/N7Z2KG>

#### 6. Putin has lost Ukraine – Kurt Volker.

11.10.2018. The looming split of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church from the Russian one underlined Volker's claim that Putin had lost Ukraine in political terms. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/E4tTx9> (Norwaynews) <https://goo.gl/SVavdU>

#### 7. Israeli and US military specialists visit Ukraine to get acquainted with Russian-made S-300 missile systems.

11.10.2018. A joint US-Israeli delegation secretly visited Ukraine to acquaint themselves with several specimens of important weaponry, including an S-300 anti-air defense system. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/HtBhHN>



### ASSESSMENT

- *Sparking cheers in Kiev, the head of global Orthodox Christianity has recognized Ukrainian churches as autocephalous from the Russian Orthodox Church. Having a possible role as "tragic and possibly irretrievable schism of the whole Orthodoxy", this move seems to undermine Moscow's central role in eastern Christianity while Moscow is trying to promote political influence through its churches.*
- *Considering the fact of "while Europe negotiates first and acts second, Russia acts first and only then negotiates" differs Russia from its European counterparts, letting Russia return back to PACE without implementing the resolution ("reverse the illegal annexation of Crimea" and "withdraw its troops from the territory of Ukraine"), may undermine its credibility and the power of its sanctions at all.*

#### 8. Kremlin promises to defend Russian Orthodox Christians in Ukraine.

12.10.2018. Russia will protect Orthodox believers in Ukraine if religious disputes go beyond lawful confrontation, Vladimir Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov has said, adding that Moscow would only use political and diplomatic methods. (RT) <https://goo.gl/CKTBDm>

#### 9. Ukraine to establish border with Russia in the Azov and Black Seas.

13.10.2018. President Petro Poroshenko put into effect the decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine (NSDC) to protect Ukraine's interests in the Azov and Black Seas, the Kerch Strait, as well as in the south and east of Ukraine, as stated in Decree No. 320/2018. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/jkpeXa>

#### 10. Bilingual magazine becomes first victim of Lviv Oblast 'moratorium on Russian'.

13.10.2018. A bilingual Ukrainian magazine may be forced to halt operations in Ukraine's western Lviv Oblast due to a law restricting Russian-language cultural products. (KYIV POST) <https://goo.gl/pNepSz>

#### 11. Ukraine reassures its ethnic Hungarians amid bitter row with Budapest.

14.10.2018. Ukraine has urged its ethnic Hungarian citizens to ignore "idiotic myths" about dangers to their safety amid a row between Budapest and Kiev. (IRISH TIMES) <https://goo.gl/hh8qb2>

### OPINIONS

#### 12. Why Russia Should Not Enjoy Impunity in the Council of Europe.

08.10.2018. Without fulfilling conditions set out in the Parliamentary Assembly's resolutions, why should Russia be allowed return to the Council? (UKRAINE WORLD) <https://goo.gl/Bbao9G>

#### 13. An end to the war in eastern Ukraine looks as far away as ever.

11.10.2018. As the war in Ukraine drags into its fifth year, there is still no end in sight. Large swathes of the Donbas region remain under the control of separatists. (THE ECONOMIST) <https://goo.gl/VYR9ml>



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Poroshenko thanks Putin for 'European' Ukraine.

01.10.2018. According to him, it is Russian President Vladimir Putin who made Ukraine a more "European country" because during the conflict in the Donbas, the level of support of European integration among the population grew from 33% to 74%. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/rkIAse>

#### 2. Poroshenko approves ratification of Ukraine-Poland defense agreement.

02.10.2018. "The agreement provides for interaction between the two countries in the exchange of information, demonstration of weapons and military equipment, joint military science programs, bilateral and multilateral military exercises" the statement reads. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/RoC7QU>

#### 3. Hungary again blocks NATO-Ukraine Commission, vows to continue.

03.10.2018. NATO ministers of defense gathered in Brussels for a two-day meeting. However, there will be no NATO-Ukraine Commission because one ally, Hungary, is continuing to block it. (KYIV POST) <https://goo.gl/qMvsL4>

#### 4. Ukraine, Hungary expel consuls as passport row deepens.

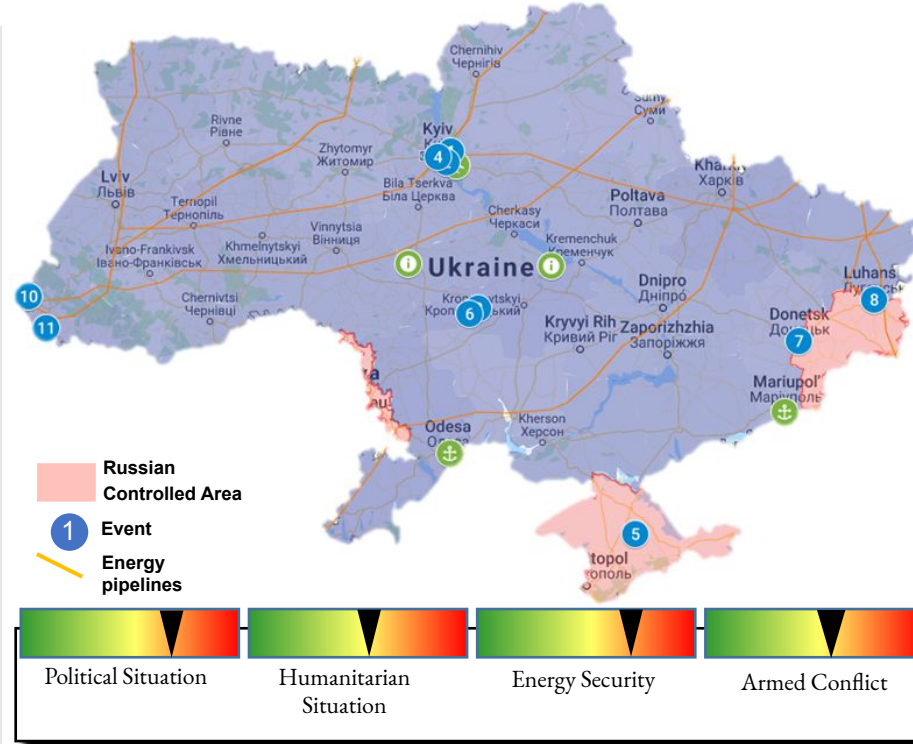
04.10.2018. Ukraine and Hungary announced tit-for-tat expulsions of each other's diplomats on Thursday, the latest in a series of spats between the neighbors that threatens to set back Kiev's aspirations for European Union and NATO membership. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/YzG9bP>

#### 5. Ukraine's panic over nukes in Crimea is groundless, Russian MP.

05.10.2018. The Russian lawmaker emphasized that regardless of the attempts to demonize Russia taken by certain Ukrainian officials, his country simply had no strategic or tactical reasons for deploying nuclear weapons in Crimea. (RT) <https://goo.gl/bJWckJ>

#### 6. Metropolitan of Minsk: situation in Ukraine can result in schism of Universal Orthodoxy.

05.10.2018. The developments involving the Ukrainian Orthodox Church can lead to a split of the entire Universal Orthodoxy, Metropolitan Pavel of Minsk and Zaslavl and Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus told reporters (TASS) <https://goo.gl/rAbXER>



### ASSESSMENT

- Over two-thirds of Ukrainians consider Ukrainian their native language and in daily life Ukrainians switch between Ukrainian and Russian depending on context (more than 80% of Ukraine's citizens are bilingual). With these facts, insisting on Russian-Language Moratorium by passing unlawful resolutions may cause to fracture the social structure in the region. Practices formulated within the frame of "the Russian language does not belong to Putin; language belongs to everyone." seem to be better off and cement local communities.
- Increasing tensions between Hungary and Ukraine may pose an obstacle to Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration, unless a mediated solution is found between the parties.

#### 7. It would be too costly for Russia to try to move forward in Donbas - U.S. envoy.

05.10.2018. U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker: "I think that's very important, making clear to Russia that it's not going to be gaining anything more here. We are hoping to deter new aggression and demonstrate that the existing aggression is only costing Russia". (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/2CBygH>

#### 8. Volker supports Klimkin's ideas on UN peacekeepers in Donbas.

05.10.2018. The UN peacekeeping mission should create environment of overall security for holding elections for the legitimate local entities in occupied Donbas. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/EXBdNB>

### OPINIONS

#### 9. Strait to war? Russia and Ukraine clash in the Sea of Azov.

02.10.2018. New Russian naval activities around Crimea could presage a new, maritime front in the war in eastern Ukraine. As the new United Nations General Assembly opens, the world should rapidly turn its attention to the Sea of Azov. (EUROPEAN COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS) <https://goo.gl/i6GkSt>

#### 10. Experts explain why Western Ukraine's recent Russian language moratorium is problematic.

03.10.2018. The Ukrainian constitution states that Ukrainian is the sole official language in the country while guaranteeing the free development and use of languages of other national minorities. The majority of Ukrainians can speak both Ukrainian and Russian and freely switch between the two. It was one of the justifications for Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in March 2014. (HROMADSKIE INTERNATIONAL) <https://goo.gl/3y3gXL>

#### 11. At war with Russia in East, Ukraine has worries in the West, too.

05.10.2018. The spectacle explains why, whether along Ukraine's border with Russia in the east or on its western frontier with the European Union, border-straddling bonds of language and culture make it so difficult for Ukraine to hang together as a single, unified state (THE NEW YORK TIMES) <https://goo.gl/7MkXPx>





### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Volker: We have information on size of Russian army in Donbas.

24.09.2018. The United States has the information on size, organization and command of regular Russian troops in Donbas. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/ksWGke>

#### 2. Volker names countries ready to send peacekeepers to Donbas.

25.09.2018. The UN peacekeeping mission could include soldiers from Sweden, Finland, Austria, Belarus, Serbia and Turkey. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/TFVZ9>

#### 3. US to transfer ships to Ukraine amid Russia tensions.

25.09.2018. The US Coast Guard plans to transfer two former 110-foot Coast Guard ships to Ukraine during a ceremony on Thursday in Baltimore. (CNN) <https://goo.gl/anjvcy>

#### 4. Ukrainian warships break Russian de-facto blockade in Azov Sea to create naval base.

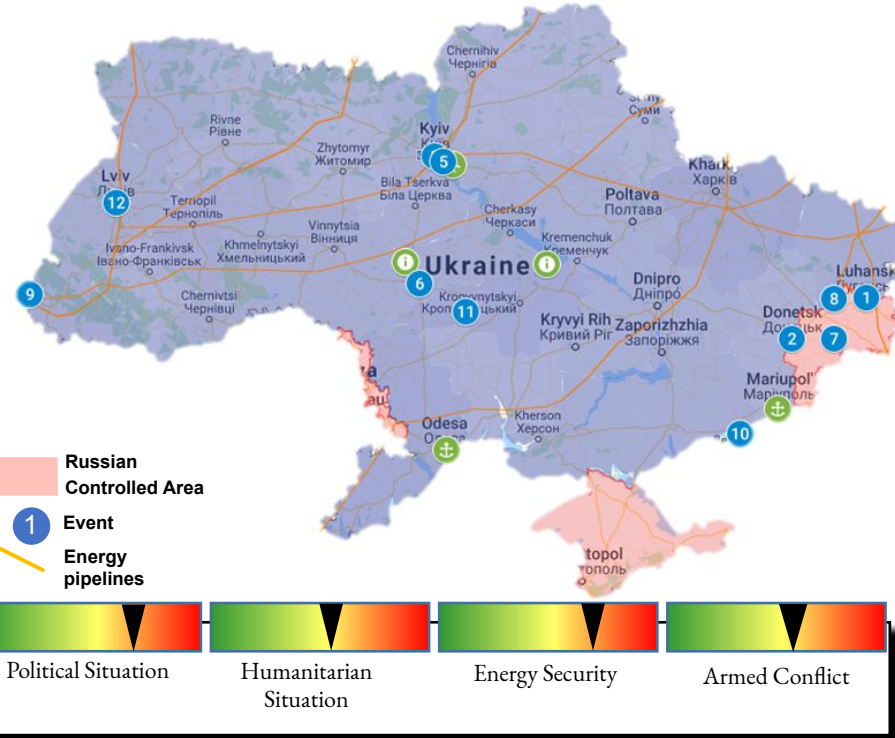
25.09.2018. The ships of the Ukrainian Navy, search and rescue vessel A500 "Donbas" and the tug A830 "Korets," left the Western Naval Base in the Black Sea port of Odesa for Berdiansk to found a new Ukrainian naval base in the Sea of Azov. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/RkUVag>

#### 5. Poroshenko calls on UN to stop Russian aggression in Ukraine.

27.09.2018. Poroshenko repeated his call for a UN peacekeeping operation in Ukraine, saying that it would help restore Ukraine's "sovereignty and territorial integrity." (RFERL) <https://goo.gl/HYm2Pu>

#### 6. Polish President reminds that signatories of Budapest Memorandum pledged to protect Ukraine.

27.09.2018. After Kyiv acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons in 1994, the United Nations made a clear violation of the Budapest Memorandum, by which Russia, the US and Great Britain guaranteed Ukraine's security and respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity, said Polish President Andrzej Duda (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/CDnKff>



### ASSESSMENT

- *In order to find a peaceful resolution to Ukraine Crisis, raising the topic of a possible UN peacekeeping mission in war-torn part of Ukraine (Donbas) is vital. But unfortunately using Minsk Agreement as an excuse, Russia's approach may evolve this touchy subject to a mare's nest and delimit peace efforts only to OSCE Special Monitoring Mission activities.*
- *Deploying two naval vessels to the Sea of Azov seems to be the first serious step of Ukraine to create a naval base in the Sea of Azov, which will likely raise tensions in the region with Russia.*

#### 7. Why Belarus Is Turning Its Back On Ukraine.

28.09.2018. Belarus is to strengthen security along its borders with Ukraine to stop the arms traffic. The announcement by President Lukashenko caused a lot of questions on both sides. (BELARUSFEED) <https://goo.gl/NUqs1c>

#### 8. Russia seen no new draft resolutions on UN mission in Donbas - Lavrov.

29.09.2018. "We have the Minsk agreements and we have proposals on the table at the United Nations Security Council in the format of a draft resolution initiated by Russia. (TASS) <https://goo.gl/SCHBq1>

#### 9. Budapest has no idea what Kiev plans to do with troops on Hungary's border .

29.09.2018. Budapest and Kiev have been locked in a year-long dispute over Ukraine's 2017 education law, which deprived the Hungarian minority in western Ukraine of access to secondary and post-secondary education in their native language (SPUTNIK) <https://goo.gl/5tSxm3>

### OPINIONS

#### 10. Ukraine and Russia take their conflict to the sea.

26.09.2018. The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has so far been restricted to ground battles over control of eastern Ukraine (STRATFOR) <https://goo.gl/p78DnK>

#### 11. Resolving Ukraine's Orthodox Church Crisis.

25.09.2018. Ukraine already has the autonomous Moscow Patriarchate Church. Soon, the country might also have an autonomous Constantinople Patriarchate Church. The Moscow patriarch has threatened to sever ties with Constantinople if the Ukrainian Orthodox Church becomes autocephalous, or fully independent from another country's patriarch. (CARNEGIE) <https://goo.gl/Sy1qCI>

#### 12. Putin's war is transforming Ukraine.

25.09.2018. When they first arrived in Lviv, the students who came from Donetsk walked around in packs, speaking loudly in Russian. They didn't want to speak Ukrainian, as most inhabitants of this city do; they didn't want to integrate. (THE WASHINGTON POST) <https://goo.gl/VK4ijR>



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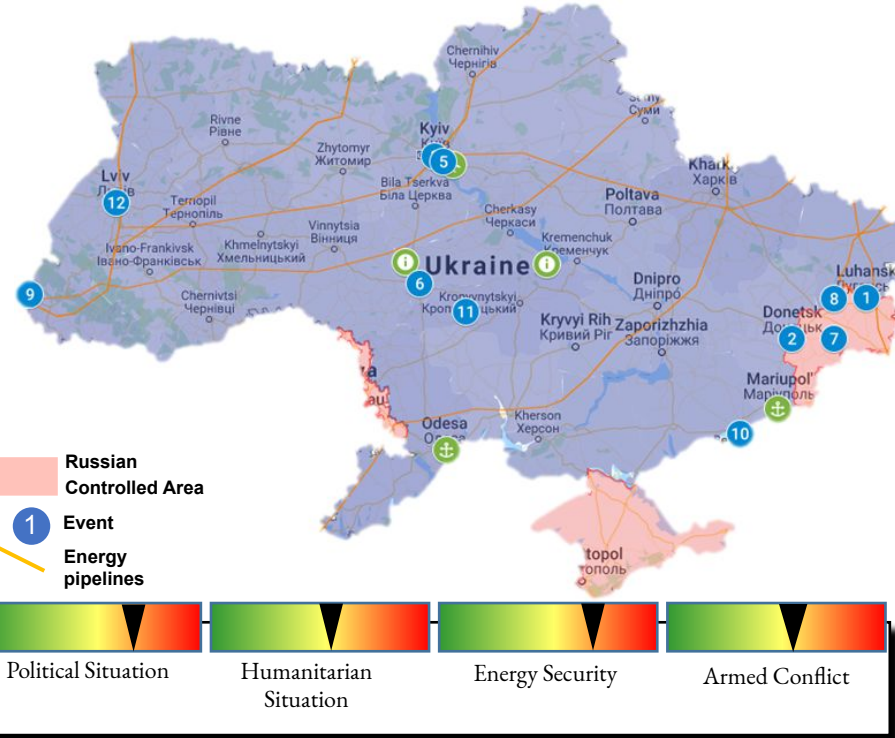
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## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Moscow says Russia & Ukraine will 'inevitably' overcome crisis after government change in Kiev.

17.09.2018. The Russian Foreign Ministry has said it expects relations between Moscow and Kiev to normalize sooner or later, but added that close ties would most likely be restored following a change of government in Ukraine. (RT) <https://goo.gl/3TQam4>

### 2. Gavin Williamson commits extra British troops in Ukraine to stop Russia 'reversing Cold War outcome'.

20.09.2018. Britain will increase military support to its ally by sending Royal Marines later this year and increase the presence of Royal Navy patrols in the Black Sea in 2019. (The TELEGRAPH) <https://goo.gl/TdYRXP>

### 3. Russia ignores PACE resolutions to end aggression against Ukraine. So PACE prepares to lift sanctions.

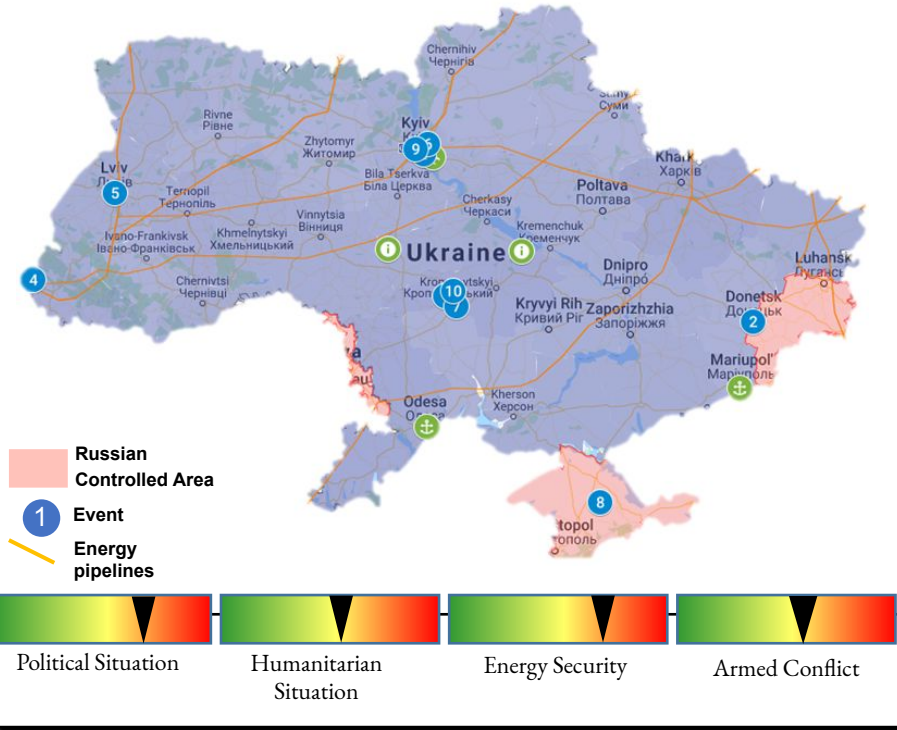
20.09.2018. On October 9, PACE will vote for a resolution effectively allowing the Russian delegation to return to the Assembly despite the sanctions introduced on it after the Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/dBv5fn>

### 4. Ukrainian Foreign Minister warns of Russian hybrid threat in Transcarpathia.

20.09.2018. "I believe that Transcarpathia is a high-risk region in terms of hybrid methods. We must invest in it [to counter hybrid threats], otherwise we will create a situation that will cost us more," (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/GTnwh8>

### 5. Ukrainian region bans Russian language songs, films, books... and more.

21.09.2018. A region in western Ukraine has decided to ban public displays of pretty much anything in Russian, claiming the move is necessary to preserve unity in the country. (RT) <https://goo.gl/7wTbG8>



## ASSESSMENT

- "Brazen and reckless" is the discourse of British Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson for Russian act of initiating the conflict in the east of Ukraine. The statement of "the safer you are here, the safer we are in the UK" may be commented as the clearest stance of UK on Russia up to the present.
- Responding to the hybrid practices of Russia needs to be in legal boundaries. It is assessed that banning Russian language with the intention of reversing the consequences of many years of Russification may spark off tension and create new unrest.

### 6. Rada sends draft constitutional amendments on Ukraine's integration into EU, NATO to Constitutional Court.

22.09.2018. The Verkhovna Rada has sent to the Constitutional Court a presidential bill on the introduction of constitutional amendments to strengthen Ukraine's strategic course for membership in the European Union and NATO. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/eEURd5>

## OPINIONS

### 7. Yulia Tymoshenko and the fight for Ukraine: 'We cannot accept peace on Putin's terms'.

17.09.2018. Four years ago, when the people of Ukraine took to the streets and ousted pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich, it looked like a new start for the country. (THE WASHINGTON POST) <https://goo.gl/B56Fnk>

### 8. Green men vs. Belarusian partisans: Crimean scenario imminent?

18.09.2018. Moscow continues to promote the idea of the inevitability of the annexation of Belarus in the future hinting that it is not a big deal. (BELSAT) <https://goo.gl/aHpi8C>

### 9. Ukraine Rebuilds Its Military Muscle to Repel a Russian Invasion.

19.09.2018. For the past four and a half years, Ukraine's military has prioritized rebuilding land warfare units to meet the immediate needs of the ongoing war in the country's embattled, eastern Donbas region. (THE DAILY SIGNAL) <https://goo.gl/WicsYf>

### 10. Two Patriarchs clash, mirroring Russian-Ukrainian tensions.

19.09.2018. Even as political relations between Russia and Ukraine have worsened of late, spiritual relations between the two main poles of authority in eastern Christianity have also taken a dive this month. (THE ECONOMIST) <https://goo.gl/vRTw3h>



### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. Chinese Ambassador to Ukraine Du Wei: Sanctions don't work.

11.09.2018. Politically, China has never supported sanctions against Russia or criticized the Kremlin for its war against Ukraine (KYIV POST) <https://goo.gl/ZKPgSg>

#### 2. Poroshenko: Russia aims to occupy Azov Sea.

13.09.2018. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko says that Russia aims to occupy the Azov Sea the same way it occupied Crimea. (The Washington Post) <https://goo.gl/WVtMqZ>

#### 3. Merkel accuses Russia of destabilizing post-Soviet countries.

14.09.2018. Russia destabilizes the situation in Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and Azerbaijan, said the German Chancellor. The German chancellor has said lifting EU sanctions on Russia is off the table until a "real ceasefire" is achieved in Ukraine. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/DyPYFg>, (DW) <https://goo.gl/5vM7kR>

#### 4. U.S. Envoy: U.S. willing to consider further lethal aid to Ukraine.

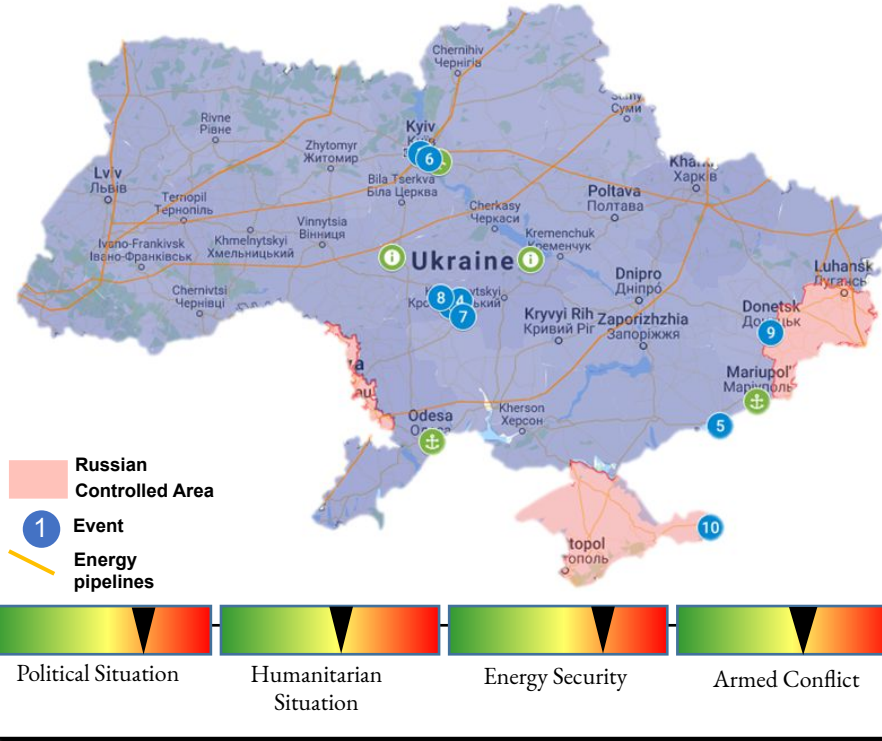
14.09.2018. Volker said the United States is concerned about the expansion of Russian naval operations in the Sea of Azov. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/m21nP2>

#### 5. Ukraine to create Azov naval base by year-end.

14.09.2018. Ukraine plans to create a naval base on the Sea of Azov before the end of the year. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/BN4yTP>

#### 6. Crimean lawmaker describes Poroshenko's call to say goodbye to Russia as 'self-consolation'.

14.09.2018. A Russian federal lawmaker representing the Crimean Republic mocked Poroshenko's recent comments about Ukraine bidding "farewell" to Russia and joining NATO as "self-consolation" and a rather desperate plea to the West. (RT) <https://goo.gl/wmQjoL>



### ASSESSMENT

- *Increasing actions of Russia in the Sea of Azov, such as construction of Kerch Bridge, de facto blockading Ukrainian ports by detentions of sea vessels, and as a response to those, Ukraine's decision of creating a naval base on Sea of Azov before the end of the year show that that Sea of Azov will likely be a conflict zone between Ukraine and Russia.*

#### 7. EU extends sanctions against Russia over Ukraine.

16.09.2018. The European Union has extended sanctions against Russia, which expire on September 15, for another six months, the EU Council press service reported (RT) <https://goo.gl/tWbyiL>, (EU) <https://goo.gl/D5u9MA>

#### 8. Recognizing Ukrainian Church would bring schism to Orthodox Christianity.

16.09.2018. Russian clergy have urged the Patriarch of Constantinople against establishing an independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church, warning it will result in "dramatic deterioration" of situation in Ukraine as regular worshippers oppose it. (RT) <https://goo.gl/YVZqPW>

#### 9. Local elections in Donbas can be held only after withdrawal of Russian troops.

16.09.2018. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has said that Ukraine is a unitary state, and local elections in Donbas can be held only after the withdrawal of Russian troops and the establishment of proper security conditions there. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/AohPpQ>

### OPINIONS

#### 10. The new war front of the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine.

15.09.2018. In recent weeks, the body of water joint with the Black Sea by the Kerch Strait has become the object of a dangerous escalation (PRAVDA) <https://goo.gl/w3pKnt>

#### 11. Moscow-Controlled 'Elections' In Ukraine's Donetsk-Luhansk: Some International Implications.

13.09.2018. Moscow's announcement of the "elections" in Donetsk and Luhansk at this juncture seems to pursue two objectives, neither of which is the international recognition of the elections' results. (JAMESTOWN) <https://goo.gl/aTMD7o>

#### 12. Autocephaly for Ukraine About More Than Religion

13.09.2018. Now that Ukrainian autocephaly appears imminent, it is becoming increasingly clear that the conferring of this status is about far more than religion. (JAMESTOWN) <https://goo.gl/eK7WKN>





### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. EU governments must decide on new Russia sanctions, Brussels says.

06.09.2018. Any new EU sanctions on Moscow over a nerve agent attack on a former Russian spy earlier this year must be taken by the bloc's governments, the European Commission. Countries including Austria and Italy are highly reluctant to approve new measures. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/7nEUkW>

#### 2. Poroshenko: Norway's investments on border with Crimea is contribution to peninsula's de-occupation.

06.09.2018. Ukraine views Norwegian investments in construction of a wind power station in the south of Kherson region near the administrative border with Crimea as Norway's contribution to de-occupation of the peninsula (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/gHi2TV>

#### 3. Ukraine to spend about \$7.1 bln on defense and security in 2019 – PM Groysman.

07.09.2018. Financing of security and defense at a level of at least 5% of GDP remains a government priority. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/wAQxu5>

#### 4. Ukraine: Ecological catastrophe in Crimea caused by Russian military exercises.

06.09.2018. Ukrainian Defense Ministry believes that the recent chemical emissions in northern Crimea were caused by projectiles hitting chemical storage facilities during military drills conducted by the Russian Armed Forces (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/ALAccA>

#### 5. Russia sends "up to 1,000 tanks towards border with Ukraine" – media.

06.09.2018. Trackers of the Russian army have posted pictures of cargo trains carrying hulking Soviet-era war machines. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/CSJuYA>

#### 6. Kyiv neither prolongs Ukraine-Russia friendship pact nor denounces it.

03.09.2018. Ukraine will not prolong its friendship and cooperation agreement with Russia, but will not denounce it either, First deputy chairwoman of the Verkhovna Rada, Iryna Gerashchenko (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/spi5su>



### ASSESSMENT

- Naming the death of Zakharchenko (The head of the DNR, Donetsk People's Republic) as "blatant provocation" and stating that Russia will continue its settlement efforts under the Minsk Accords, Russia seems to use every opportunities of "smart power" tools to shape the views on Ukraine Crisis.
- It is stated that over the last three months, the ratings of Vladimir Putin and the Russian authorities have fallen by almost 20 percent, down to a level not seen since the protest era of 2011-2012. Replacing local people with Russians in Donbas, which may pave the way for potential tensions, is likely to be preview of events for Putin to regain his strength.

#### 7. Ukrainian President proposes to prohibit Russian Black Sea Fleet from staying in Crimea.

04.09.2018. President of Ukraine has submitted a bill on changing the country's constitution to the parliament. This bill bans military bases from hosting military groups within the international treaties framework (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/FJDbbV>

#### 8. Russia will stick to Minsk Accords despite recent murder of Donetsk Republic head – Kremlin.

03.09.2018. The recent murder of the head of the Donetsk People's Republic complicates talks with Ukraine, but Russia will continue its settlement efforts under the Minsk Accords, Putin's press secretary told reporters. (RT) <https://goo.gl/CG4Cec>

### OPINIONS

#### 9. A warning sign in the Donbas: Moscow replacing local people with Russians.

08.09.2018. One of the most reliable signs that an aggressor is about to launch a new attack is his replacement of local people who might resist his effort with carefully selected outsiders who can be counted on to support or at least not actively oppose any new aggression. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/ybkg3f>

#### 10. Falling ratings even more likely to lead Putin to large war than they were before 2014, Larionov says.

05.09.2018. Over the last three months, the ratings of Vladimir Putin and the Russian authorities have fallen by almost 20 percent, down to a level not seen since the protest era of 2011-2012. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/BkzuPi>

#### 11. Ukrainian Separatist's Assassination May Have Catastrophic Consequences.

08.09.2018. The assassination of Alexander Zakharchenko, on Friday did not come as a surprise taking into account the situation in Ukraine. (EURASIAREVIEW) <https://goo.gl/WCDfe7>

### KEY EVENTS

#### 1. U.S. ready to expand arms deliveries to strengthen defense of Ukraine, - Volker.

29.08.2018. The US is ready to increase arms supplies in Ukraine to strengthen the Navy and Air Defense. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/YTjG4i>

#### 2. OSCE spots cargo trucks from Russia entering Donbas.

29.08.2018. The trucks delivered ammunition for Russian heavy weapons storage in Khrustalnyi, as well as for new Russian electronic warfare systems in Donbas (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/vT7g7K>

#### 3. Volker-Surkov talks "on the verge of collapse" ..

29.08.2018. "Negotiations on Donbas between U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker and Russian presidential aide Vladislav Surkov are "on the verge of collapse." (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/dozqkqW>

#### 4. Russia creates thousands of fake accounts before elections in Ukraine, - Poroshenko.

29.08.2018. According to the President, Russia got fairly good at other countries, including that case at the Dutch referendum on ratification of the Agreement on the association and Brexit referendum (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/k2j8r2>

#### 5. Ukraine to strengthen defense of Sea of Azov.

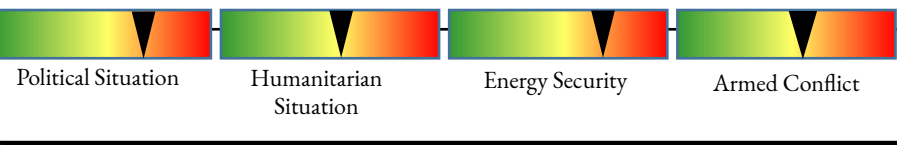
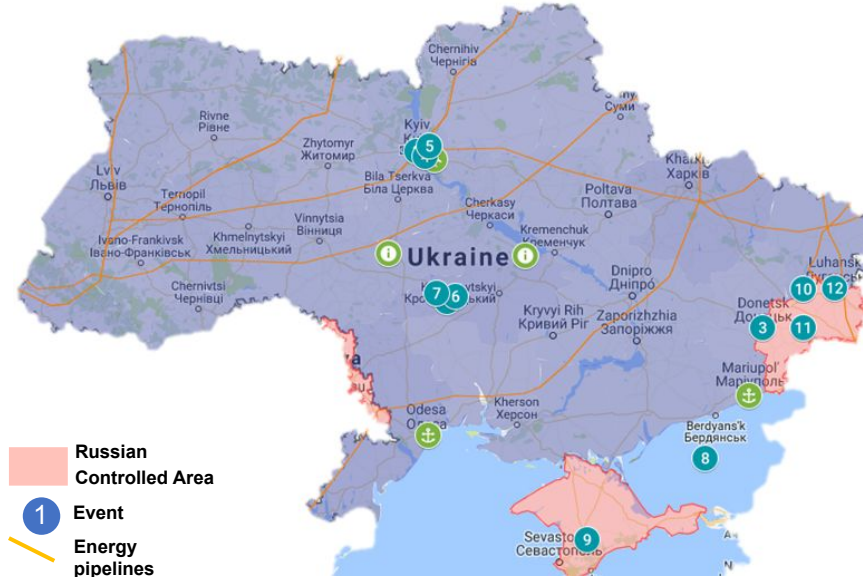
29.08.2018. the commander of the Naval Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, says that the Ukrainian naval forces will strengthen the defense of the Sea of Azov in the near future (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/L5WtDe>

#### 6. Ukraine files a request with the US for the purchase of air defense systems.

30.08.2018. Kyiv has sent an official request to Washington for the purchase of air defense systems for the Ukrainian army (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/UYge4L>

#### 7. Ukraine soon to approve strategy of information re-integration of annexed Crimea.

30.08.2018. The Ukrainian Cabinet is going to approve the strategy of information re-integration of Russian-annexed Crimea within the next few months (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/HRRzY5>



### ASSESSMENT

- By using the word "impossible" about continuation of talks in Normandy format, it seems that Russia has desire to take a firm stand on Ukraine Crisis justifying Zakharchenko's (The head of the DNR, Donetsk People's Republic) death.
- The Ukrainian intention to build up the naval grouping, marines and artillery in the Azov direction for the reliable defense in the near future and request to Washington for the purchase of air defense systems to meet the needs of the Ukrainian army are likely to be the key events both to consolidate Ukrainian Army and to raise the tension in the region.

#### 8. Blast kills top Donetsk rebel Zakharchenko.

31.08.2018. A leader of Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, Alexander Zakharchenko, has been killed in an explosion at a cafe in Donetsk city (BBC) <https://goo.gl/w5XkuU>

#### 9. Donbass leader's murder shows Kiev clearly wants to end Ukrainian crisis by force, says Moscow.

31.08.2018. The murder of Aleksandr Zakharchenko, the leader of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, was "most plausibly" orchestrated by Kiev and it brings the Ukrainian government's true plans to the light (RT) <https://goo.gl/HXN9ah>

#### 10. Russia says talks on Ukraine in 'Normandy format' not possible now.

01.09.2018. Russian foreign minister said talks on Ukraine known as the Normandy format were impossible after the killing of a rebel leader in eastern Ukraine (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/Q5jvwQ>

### OPINIONS

#### 11. Latest military exercise shows 'Kremlin is actively preparing for a world war'.

30.08.2018. Moscow's announcement that it will soon conduct its largest military exercise since 1981 "means only one thing," Pavel Felgenhauer says. "The Kremlin is actively preparing for a world war." (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/iA2bXT>

#### 12. Nord Stream 2 will bring corruption and... war to Europe.

30.08.2018. "German politicians are increasingly holding pro-Russian and anti-American views, and it is destroying transatlantic solidarity" (DAY) <https://goo.gl/PuJ9QG>

#### 13. Russian Federation Blockade of the Mariupol and Berdyansk Ports: trends and statistics

28.08.2018. The summary and analysis of the detentions of sea vessels headed to and from the Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov by the Russian Navy. (BSNews) <https://goo.gl/fwdiFU>



## KEY EVENTS

### 1. Russia elaborating escalation scenario in Transnistria to create military threat to Moldova, Ukraine.

20.08.2018. Expert on international affairs Serhiy Danylenko says Russia is working out a scenario of escalation in Transnistria to create, if necessary, a military threat to Moldova and Ukraine. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/2Qt5B3>

### 2. Pro-Russian militants cancel autumn "election".

20.08.2018. The militants decided to postpone "the election" of the leaders of the so-called "Luhansk People's Republic" (LPR) and "Donetsk People's Republic" (DPR) for uncertain times (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/Ft7nLZ>

### 3. Kremlin expects specific proposals on Syria and Ukraine from Trump.

21.08.2018. The Kremlin is waiting for specific proposals on cooperation to resolve the situation in Syria and Ukraine, which, according to US President Donald Trump, is the condition for lifting anti-Russian sanctions (TASS) <https://goo.gl/EWg2ZH>

### 4. Russia blocks the Sea of Azov.

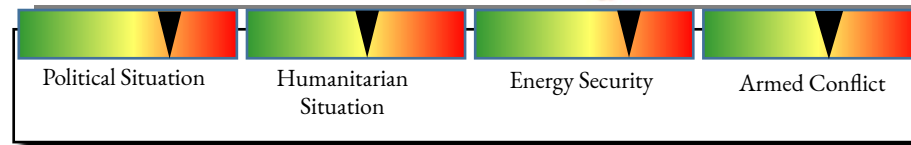
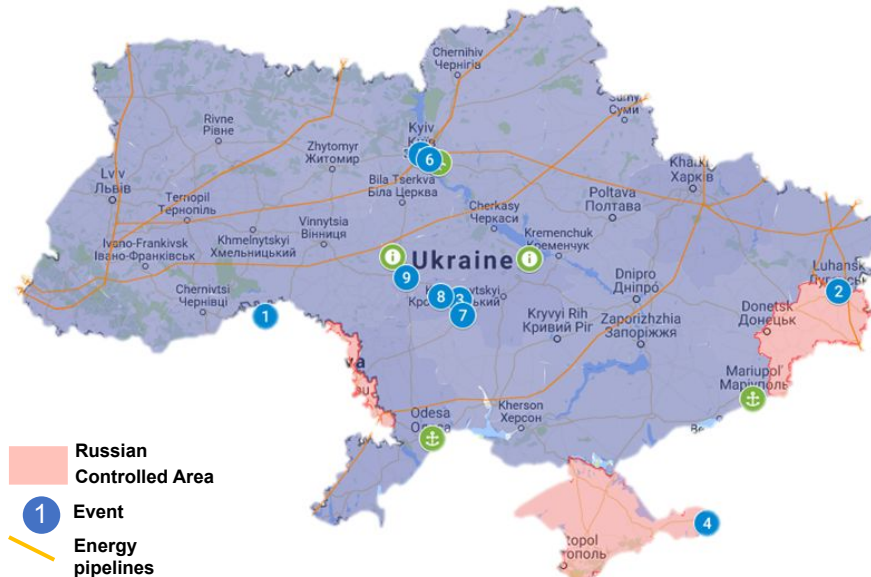
22.08.2018. Russia took complete control over the Sea of Azov. During the past week, Russia did not allow any ships to pass through the Kerch Strait to reach the Ukraine ports. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/VQqrNV>

### 5. Nord Stream 2 to deprive Ukraine of gas transit despite guarantees from Russia - Klimkin.

22.08.2018. Ukraine will consistently fight against the construction of the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, because Russia will stop supplying natural gas via Ukrainian territory despite any guarantees. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/rU85UD>

### 6. Units from ten NATO countries and Javelins in military parade on Ukraine's 27th Independence Day.

24.08.2018. A military parade on the central street of Kyiv was held to mark Ukraine's 27th Independence Day said to be the largest yet. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/c4E1fl>



## ASSESSMENT

- *Increased Russian military activities in Transnistria including its latest military exercise can be assessed as a continuation of Russian hybrid warfare in the region similar to annexation of Crimea.*
- *Taking part of foreign delegations (US, UK, Canada etc.) in Ukraine's 27th Independence Day may be seemed as the solidarity giving a very clear message to Russia which highlights that the support to Ukraine's territorial integrity is to be continued unless a peaceful solution is reached.*

### 7. Poroshenko intends to cut last knot Russia uses to tie us.

24.08.2018. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko said that he intends to cut the last knot connecting Ukraine with Russia - to make the Orthodox community independent from the Russian church. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/Xs2mQ3>

### 8. Kremlin announces new negotiations between Surkov and US special envoy Volker on the Donbas.

24.08.2018. The new meeting on the Donbas between Kurt Volker, the U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine and Vladislav Surkov, the aide to Russian President Vladimir Putin is being prepared (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/KxLU4B>

### 9. Kyiv: Ukraine and Great Britain may start joint production of weapons.

25.08.2018. "The parties discussed prospects for joint production of arms and military equipment on the territory of Ukraine with the participation of British companies" (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/VGbpvV>

## OPINIONS

### 1. 'Clarity on Caspian has given Russia the opportunity to control Sea of Azov'.

21.08.2018. The littoral states were unable to agree to a convention on the Caspian because they disagreed as to whether it was a sea or an inland body of water. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/5Tqaz4>

### 2. To Whom Does Crimea Belong? – Analysis.

23.08.2018. Russia's Annexation of the Ukrainian Peninsula and the Question of Historical Justice (EURASIA REVIEW) <https://goo.gl/nRqFgW>

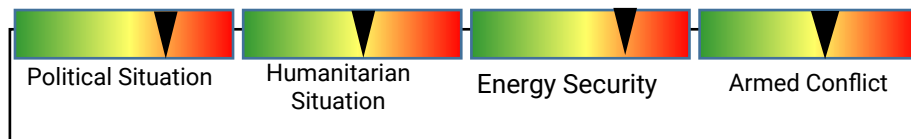
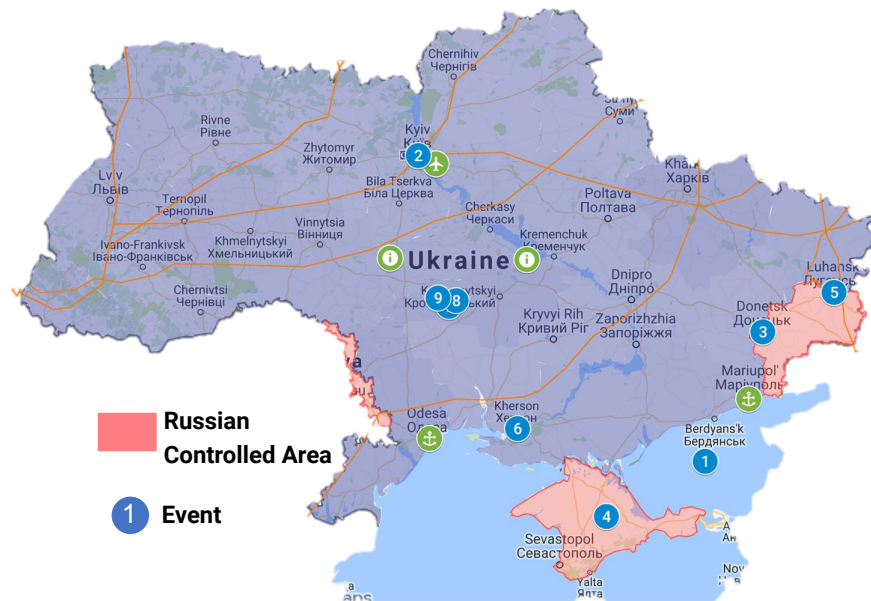
### 3. How to Solve Ukraine's, Moldova's and Georgia's Security Dilemma? The Idea of a Post-Soviet Intermarium Coalition.

27.08.2018. By cooperating and allying with each other, the states between the Baltic and Black Seas could bolster their security and in particular improve the balance of power against Russia, without immediate further Eastern enlargement of NATO and the EU. (Foreign Policy Blogs) <https://goo.gl/U1Bp77>



## UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

(13 - 19 AUG 18)



### Assessment:

- *Considering Merkel's official statement "I am of the opinion that controversial issues can only be addressed in dialogue and through dialogue" in the meeting with Putin, it seems that it would positively affect the march of events specific to Ukraine in the coming days.*
- *Describing the "Nord Stream 2" as an economic project, Putin is likely to use this project as a political warfare tool to pursue its agenda in Ukraine Crisis while relieving European Partners.*

**6. Some Russian ships stop cargoes to Ukraine after a Russian tanker detained in a Ukrainian port.**

15.08.2018. Some Russian ships have stopped transporting cargo to Ukraine, deeming it risky after a Russian tanker was detained in a Ukrainian port as Kiev made good on sanctions against Moscow (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/SmkAo9> (OPINION: <https://goo.gl/g47KTF>)

**7. Kremlin: New Ukrainian sanctions against Russia would be a violation of international law.**

17.08.2018. The imposition of sanctions against Russia by Ukraine will be considered "a blatant violation of rules of international law," stated the official representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/it9nrD>

**8. Kyiv promises not to block Russian cargo transit through Ukraine.**

18.08.2018. The Minister of Infrastructure of Ukraine, Volodymyr Omelyan said that the Ukrainian authorities are not going to block the transit of Russian cargo through the territory of their country. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/QxnwF1>

**9. Vladimir Putin, Angela Merkel meet near Berlin to discuss Syria, other diplomatic issues.**

18.08.2018. Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel met outside Berlin on Saturday for talks ranging from the conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, to Iran and a gas pipeline project that has drawn U.S. ire. (GLOBAL NEWS) <https://goo.gl/u3MNPs> <https://goo.gl/Xkfr7T> <https://goo.gl/PiqiuV>

**10. The Ukrainian Military: From Degradation to Renewal.**

15.08.2018. Although fighting capabilities have reached their highest levels since independence in 1991, the military reform is far from complete, and the problems faced while reforming the armed forces, such as (1) the poor quality of management (the Soviet-style management), (2) corruption, and (3) the lack of adequate funding, do not allow anyone to be absolutely certain of success of the reforms. (FPRI) <https://goo.gl/aZ8L9Q>

**1. Kyiv studying various ways to improve situation in Azov Sea involving allies and partners.**

13.08.2018. Deputy Minister for Temporary Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons Heorhiy Tuka assesses the situation with Russian expansion in the Sea of Azov as very complex and claims that the Ukrainian authorities are studying certain scenarios for Russia's response.

(INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/u5Q75e>

**2. Poroshenko calls on Israel to take measures to improve situation with admission of Ukrainian citizens to the country.**

14.08.2018. President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, during a meeting with Minister for Environment, Minister for Jerusalem and Heritage of the State of Israel Zeev Elkin, has discussed the development of trade and economic cooperation between the two countries. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/mBivqQ>

**3. Russian reconnaissance group arrives to Donbas to prepare saboteurs.**

15.08.2018. Russian intelligence officers are conducting regional reconnaissance and demining approaches to Ukrainian positions. (112 UA) <https://goo.gl/5kY84x>

**4. Moscow did not expect response from West to war in Ukraine, says U.S. Special Representative Volker.**

15.08.2018. Putin expected the reaction of the West to his actions in Ukraine to be insignificant, Volker said. In the case of Crimea, he was right, as there was no significant reaction, he said. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/YJyQzk>

**5. German, Ukrainian foreign ministers discuss peacekeepers in Donbas.**

15.08.2018. German and Ukrainian Foreign Ministers Heiko Maas and Pavlo Klimkin have discussed the issues of a peacekeeping force in eastern Ukraine, the German Federal Foreign Office has reported (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/47rPbm> (OPINION: <https://goo.gl/oDxkwT>)





## UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

(06 - 12 AUG 18)

**5. Poroshenko and Pompeo discuss further measures to counteract Russian aggression, restore Ukraine's territorial integrity.**

08.08.2018. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko has had a telephone conversation with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to discuss further measures to counteract Russian aggression and restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/WpZcwg>

**6. German military criticized over Ukrainian medical evacuation flights.**

09.08.2018. For more than four years, the German military has been flying injured Ukrainians to German cities for treatment. One German lawmaker fears "fascist" paramilitaries could be among them. (DW) <https://goo.gl/dh6iiz>

**7. U.S. negotiator for Ukraine: Russia could end fighting in Donbas at any time.**

11.08.2018. U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations Kurt Volker said "Russia and its forces have been obstructing the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to prevent the world from seeing how it sustains and prolongs the fighting. Russia could end the fighting at any time and bring peace for Ukraine. Control of the international border is essential." (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/PXszZA>

**8. OSCE SMM reports 4 Russian electronic warfare systems in Luhansk.**

11.08.2018. In non-government-controlled areas, on 28 July, an SMM mini-UAV spotted four distinct electronic warfare systems near Chornukhyne (64km south-west of Luhansk), all seen for the first time by the SMM. On 2 August, during a flight over the same area, the UAV did not spot the same systems. (OSCE) <https://goo.gl/gnVU2D> (InformNapalm) <https://goo.gl/BNCzE8>

**1. Ukraine threatens to sever profitable railway links with Russia.**

07.08.2018. Officials in Kiev say they are considering cutting train connections with Russia, the most profitable destination for Ukrainian Railways. "We are considering the option of closing the railway communication with Moscow," Ukrainian Minister of Infrastructure Vladimir Omelyan told.

(RT) <https://goo.gl/2B8EEP>

**2. OSCE: Russian occupation forces bringing heavy weapons to Donbas during 'harvest truce'.**

07.08.2018. OSCE SMM reports that the number of ceasefire violations in the Donbas has increased because Russia has increased the number of heavy equipment and weapons by nearly tenfold over the past month. The so called "harvest truce" in Donbas, announced on July 1, is used by the occupation forces controlling the region to deliver significant quantities of arms and ammunition from the territory of the Russian Federation. (KYIV POST) <https://goo.gl/rDDMYE>

(KHPG) <https://goo.gl/UMJ71L> (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/dmEmBE>

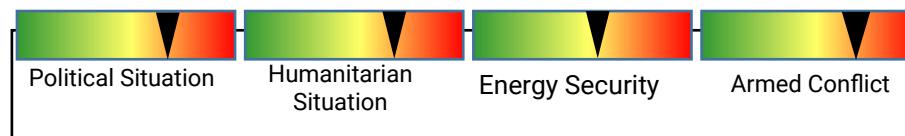
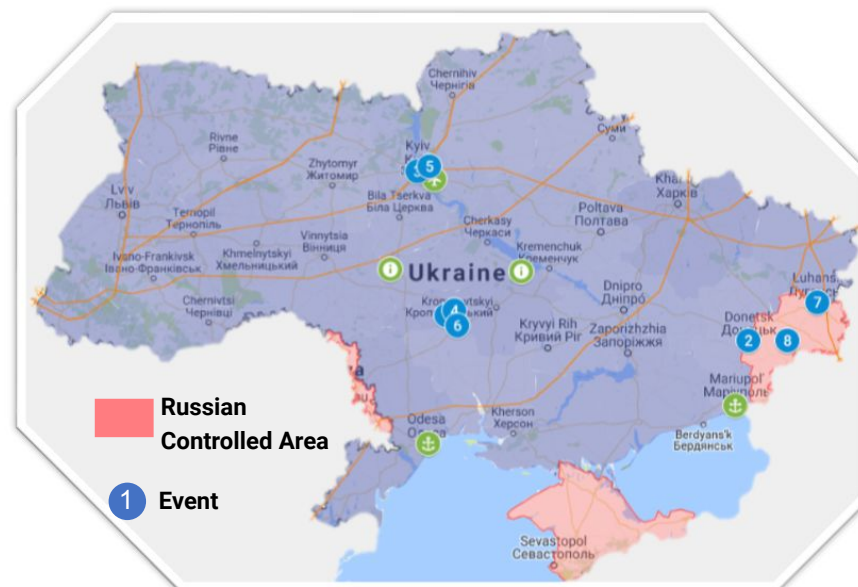
**3. Large-scale military exercises begin in Ukraine.**

07.08.2018. The Armed Forces of Ukraine have begun conducting the Speka ("Heat") 2018 large-scale exercises involving territorial defense units.

(UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/cbSNVD>

**4. Russia using array of non-military methods against Ukraine.**

08.08.2018. Ukraine's Minister for Temporarily Occupied Territories and Internally Displaced Persons Vadym Chernysh has said Russia is no longer trying to influence Ukrainian society through direct propaganda, but has moved on to covert information activities. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/oTQFc7>



### Assessment:

- *Increased Russian military build-up in Donbas region is likely a response to Western support to Ukraine including U.S security assistance for further deterrence.*
- *The use of hard power elements by both sides is likely to escalate the situation in Ukraine.*



## UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

(30 JULY - 05 AUG 18)

### 1. Russia sees no conditions for new summit on Ukraine in Normandy format.

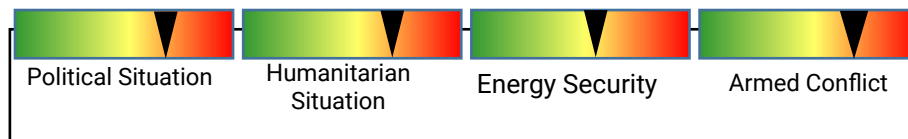
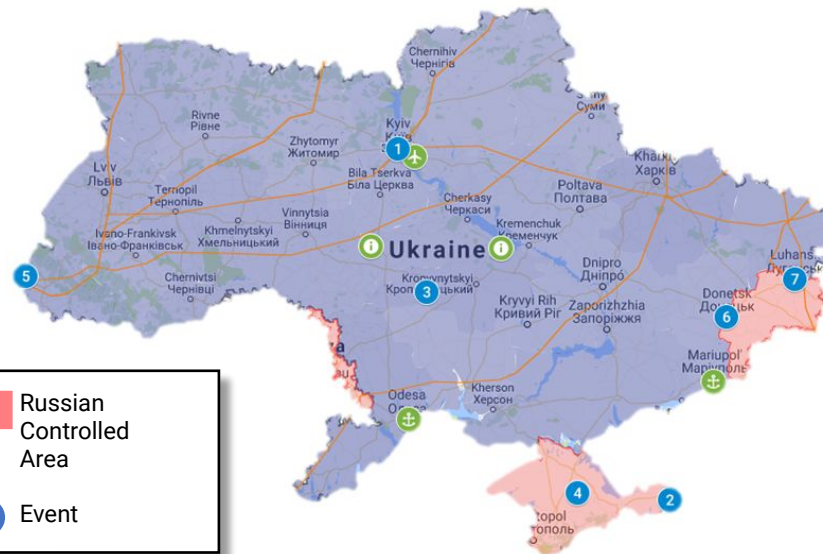
30 July 2018. There are no conditions yet for holding another top-level meeting in the Normandy format, since the previous agreements between the four leaders have not been implemented, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on Monday. (RT) <https://goo.gl/7mDhGN>

### 2. EU adds six entities involved in the construction of the Kerch Bridge connecting the illegally annexed Crimea to Russia to sanctions list.

31 July 2018. The Council added six entities to the list of those subject to restrictive measures over actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. They are listed because of their involvement in the construction of the Kerch Bridge, connecting Russia to the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula. Through their actions they supported the consolidation of Russia's control over the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula, which in turn further undermines the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine. (EUROPEAN COUNCIL) <https://goo.gl/1sQ2fN>

### 3. U.S. Senate passes NDAA with \$250 mln in security assistance to Ukraine, including for lethal weapons.

02 Aug 2018. The U.S. Senate passed the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2019, which, among other things, provides for the allocation of \$250 million in security assistance to Ukraine. "The document includes major provisions of the draft 'Ukraine Cybersecurity Cooperation Act.' It also confirms Washington's commitment to the U.S.-Ukraine Charter on Strategic Partnership, the Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances, and support for Ukraine's cooperation with NATO." (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/o5AnfL>



**Assessment:**

- In addition to Russia's intent to maintain the current frozen conflict status in Ukraine, the EU's inability to counter Russian aggression in a united fashion renders the solution in a foreseeable future elusive. The individual moves of some European countries such as Hungary and Slovakia deepen the divide in the EU and certainly do not help solving the problems in Ukraine.*
- Addition of the entities involved in the construction of Kerch Bridge to the sanctions list is far from being deterrent as previous additions did not yield in such effect. Within the same context, the extent to which US security assistance will provide deterrence is also questionable.*

### 4. Delegation from Slovakia visits Crimea.

01 Aug 2018. A delegation of politicians and businessmen from Slovakia visited Crimea. Foreign Ministry of Ukraine repeatedly warned foreign citizens of illegal trips to Crimea. This visit put also focus on Slovakia's ties to Russia (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/4FCoRM>, (Irish Times) <https://goo.gl/vNQcqp>

### 5. Ukraine wants Hungary to explain decision on minister for Transcarpathia.

02 Aug 2018. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine has strongly protested against Hungary's decision to create the post of an authorized minister responsible for the development of Transcarpathia and develop kindergartens in the Carpathian basin. The Hungarian minister's authority will cover part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/91bEHf>

### 6. Over 4,000 ceasefire violations recorded in Donbas last week - OSCE SMM.

03 Aug 2018. Principal Deputy Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) to Ukraine "Since the recommitment to the ceasefire on July 1, the level of violence is lower than what it [had been before]." According to him, the situation remains highly volatile at some moments like now, when there is relative calm, but at times "all hell breaks loose." Last week, the OSCE SMM in fact recorded over 4,000 ceasefire violations," he said. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/1RhJZ5>

### 7. Ukraine plans suing Russia for compensation of damage in Donbas and Crimea.

05 Aug 2018. Ukraine authorities plan to create an interdepartmental body to consolidate claims against Russia for compensation of damage over the Kremlin's aggression in Donbas and Crimea annexation. Experts consider the move to be timely, although warning that hearings in international courts will be lengthy, while Russia will not pay off its debts voluntarily, so Ukraine needs to be strategically prepared for foreclosures. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/Xdp5oK>



# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH (23-29 JULY 18)

## 4. Cabinet approves strategy for information reintegration of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

26.07.2018. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine approved the strategy for information reintegration of Donetsk and Luhansk regions. The objectives of the strategy are realizing information human rights and freedoms, increasing citizens' support for state policy in the field of information reintegration, and creating mechanisms for ensuring the access of Ukrainian citizens who live in the occupied territory to the all-Ukrainian information space. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/9K1HyY>

## 5. Nord Stream 2 Not Viable, US Gas to Be Major Player in Europe.

26.07.2018. US Energy Secretary Rick Perry said that the Nord Stream 2 and the Turkish Stream pipeline projects are not commercially viable and liquefied natural gas (LNG) will be a major player in Europe. The Nord Stream 2 is facing fierce opposition from the United States, which has ambitious plans to export its own LNG to Europe. (SPUTNIK) <https://goo.gl/3U2Jk3>

## 6. Eastern Ukraine Referendum Idea Touched Upon at Berlin Meeting.

26.07.2018. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin said that the question of holding a referendum in eastern Ukraine was touched upon at a meeting of representatives of Germany, France, Russia and Ukraine in Berlin (THE NEW YORK TIMES) <https://goo.gl/gYoJbi>

## 7. U.S. Senate Committee approves resolution condemning occupation of Crimea.

27.07.2018. The U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations has approved a draft resolution condemning Moscow's attempt to annex the Ukrainian Crimea, which is expected to be voted at the Senate. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/vBTn2p>

## 1. Russian FM, Chief of General Staff Discuss Syria, Ukraine Conflicts with Macron.

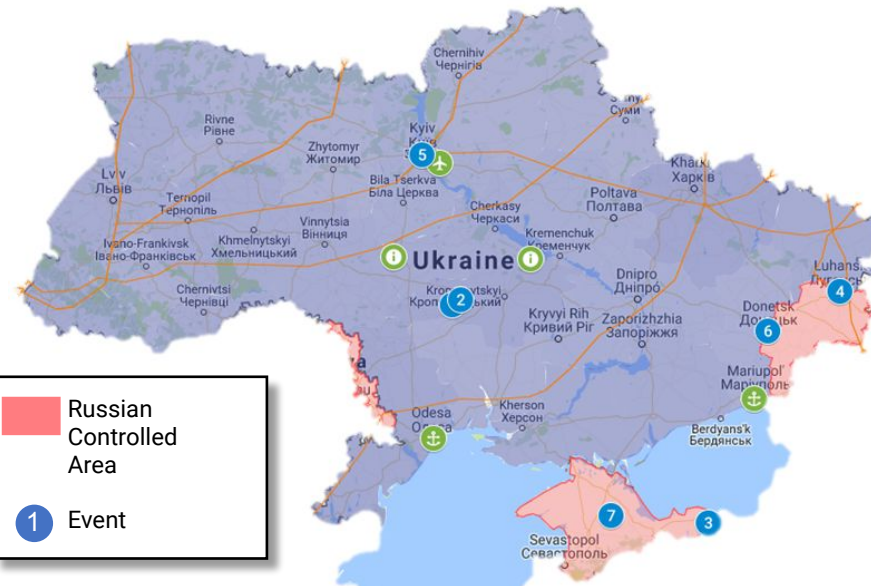
24.07.2018. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chief of Russia's General Staff Valery Gerasimov discussed on Tuesday with French President Emmanuel Macron the settlement of the Syrian and Ukrainian conflicts. "The sides also discussed the implementation of the Minsk agreements, reached on February 12, 2015, confirming their intention to continue contacts in the Normandy Four format," the statement said. (SPUTNIK) <https://goo.gl/v9VyPQ>

## 2. Merkel meets Russia's foreign minister, general staff chief in Berlin to discuss Ukraine, Syria.

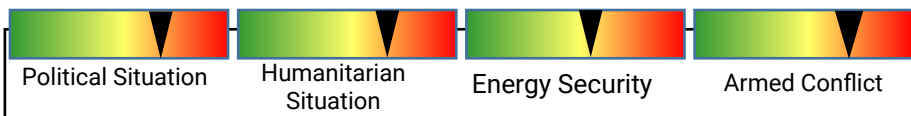
24.07.2018. German Chancellor Angela Merkel met with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Russia Valery Gerasimov in Berlin on July 24 to discuss the Middle East crisis, namely in Syria, and the conflict in the east of Ukraine. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/fhcN6M>

## 3. Russia changes tactics in blocking Azov Sea.

25.07.2018. Russia has changed its behavior in the Azov Sea by starting to detain foreign ships coming through the Kerch Strait. Oleh Slobodian, an assistant to the head of the Ukrainian State Border Guard Service: "We are observing that the Russian Federation has changed the algorithm of its actions in the Azov Sea [...] It detains foreign ships coming to Ukraine, in the Kerch Strait, delaying the time for granting permits to pass through the Kerch Strait. There is information that the ships are detained sometimes for up to three days". It influences the economic attractiveness of Ukraine. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/vjBrVN>



■ Russian Controlled Area  
1 Event



**Assessment:**

- As meetings to negotiate on hot subjects such as "Status of Crimea, Referendum Idea in Donbass and Nord Stream-2" are proceeding, it appears that there is a lack of united political front among western allies. This situation strengthens Russian position on the table.
- While Crimea maintains its sensitive status, Russians bring up the subject of "Donbass Referendum" during political talks with Normandy Four states. With that, Russia is likely aiming to legitimize its hold on Donbass as happened in Crimea.
- Regarding Azov, Russia may heighten the tension by taking measures to block commercial activities which may pave the way for economic disruption of Ukraine's shipping trade.

# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

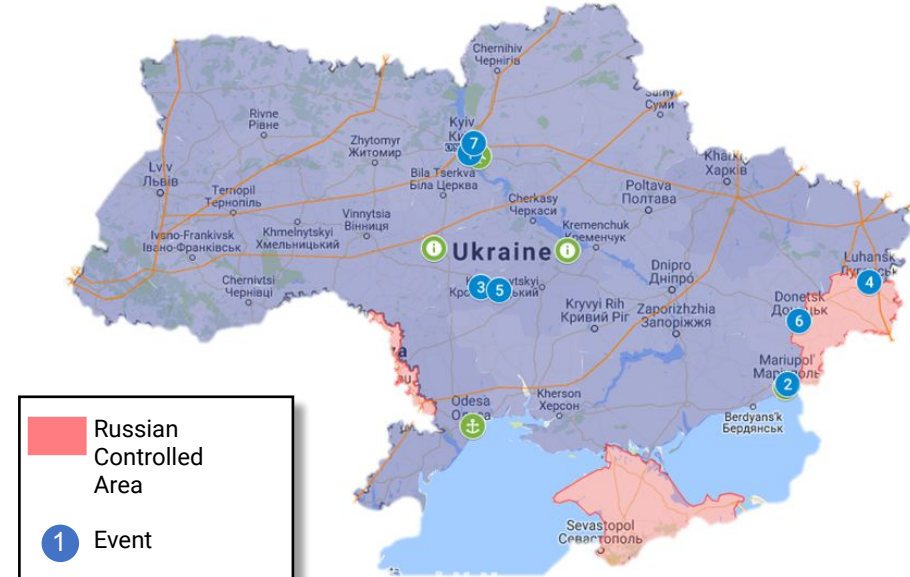
## (16-22 JULY 18)

**4. Bloomberg: Putin made proposal to Trump on Donbass.**  
19.07.2018. Russian President Vladimir Putin made a proposal to the US leader Donald Trump on Donbass. "Vladimir Putin told Russian diplomats that he made a proposal to Donald Trump at their summit this week to hold a referendum to help resolve the conflict in eastern Ukraine, but agreed not to disclose the plan publicly so the U.S. president could consider it," the source noted referring to the two people who attended Putin's closed-door speech. (BLOOMBERG) <https://goo.gl/S74X5U>

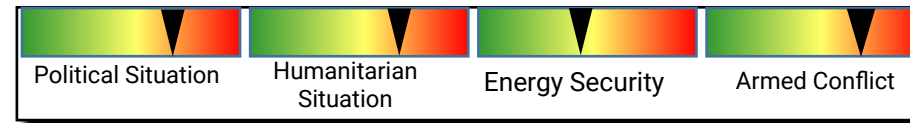
**5. Putin warns of 'consequences' if Nato develops closer ties with Georgia and Ukraine.**  
20.07.2018. Vladimir Putin has warned Nato of "consequences" if the western military alliance cultivates closer ties with Ukraine and Georgia. The Russian president said such a policy, which he branded "aggressive" and "irresponsible", was a direct threat to the country's national security. (INDEPENDENT) <https://goo.gl/Sivwso>

**6. U.S. rejects Russia idea for referendum in eastern Ukraine.**  
20.07.2018. The United States on Friday rejected a proposal from Russia for a referendum to be held to decide the fate of eastern Ukraine, saying it would not be legitimate since the area is not under control of the Ukrainian government. The proposal had emerged in the days following U.S. President Donald Trump's summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, Finland. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/JPYTWC>

**7. U.S. allocates \$200 million for Ukraine's security and defense.**  
20.07.2018. The United States has decided to allocate \$200 million to Ukraine for strengthening its security and defense in the 2018 fiscal year. "These funds will be used to provide our state with military equipment and services, logistics support and training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine," the Ukrainian Embassy in the United States reported (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/5zr3TX>



Russian Controlled Area  
1 Event



**Assessment:**

- Considering the time when U.S. ties to Europe are fraying, and both presidents (Putin and Trump) are critical of the EU and NATO, Helsinki Summit is of great importance regarding Ukraine. The summit can be seen as a first step towards improving Russian relations with the US.
- Putin's proposal of "holding a referendum in war-torn eastern Ukraine" at a behind-closed-doors meeting with ambassadors and diplomats at the foreign ministry in Moscow may sidestep peace efforts and increase pressure on the Ukrainian government in its battle with the pro-Russian separatists.
- Trump tweeted that he was looking forward to a second meeting with Putin. It seems likely that the solution seeking towards Ukraine Crisis will continue through diplomatic channels.

**1. Russia & EU negotiate Ukraine gas transit as exports to Europe reach seasonal high.**

17.07.2018. Russia is holding talks with the EU and Ukraine over extending a new gas transit contract after 2019. Kiev is concerned that Gazprom will cut its transits through Ukraine after the current contract expires and the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from Russia to Germany is built. However, President Putin has assured both Brussels and Washington that transit through Ukraine will continue. (RT) <https://goo.gl/x1SPu3>

**2. Is Russia preparing to attack Mariupol by blockading Ukrainian Azov Sea ports?.**

18.07.2018. The Kerch Strait Bridge, illegally constructed in Ukrainian domestic waters by Russia to connect the Russian territory with occupied Crimea, has effectively limited navigation to the Ukrainian ports of Mariupol and Berdiansk at the coast of the Sea of Azov. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said, "The invaders will definitely need the bridge when they will urgently leave our Crimea." But until now, Putin showed no signs that he is going to leave the occupied peninsula and the Ukrainian maritime zone. (EUROMAIDAN PRESS) <https://goo.gl/dEXqKs>

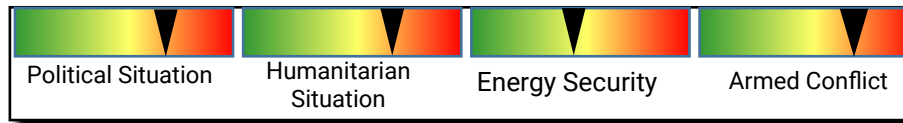
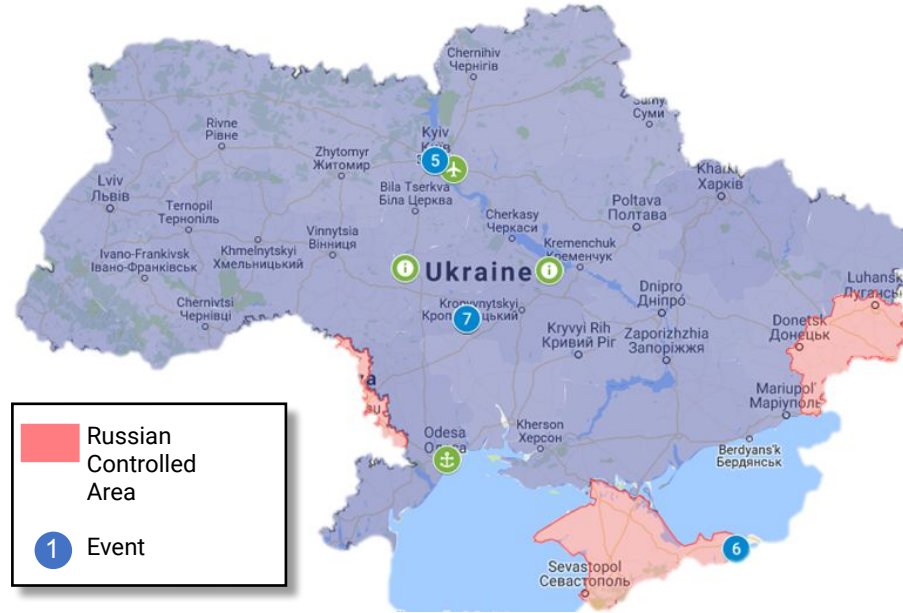
**3. Ukraine feels strong support from Canada in restoring territorial integrity and repelling Russian aggression.**

19.07.2018. "Canada occupies a special place for Ukraine. We are linked by a long history and warm friendship. We feel Canada's firm assistance in restoring our territorial integrity and repelling Russia's aggression" Groysman said. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/o7WUig>



# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

## (09-15 JULY 18)



**Assessment:**

- Overt emphasis on going forward with “Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity” in both EU-Ukraine Summit and NATO Brussels Summit shows that it is highly likely for Russia to go on facing “Ukraine Crisis” as a matter of pressure in the near future.
- Both NATO and EU have underscored the importance of “Cyber Threat and Security” related to Ukraine Crisis. Taking together the statement of Defense Minister of Russia Sergey Shoygu (“I consider it impossible that a direct clash emerges between Russia and Ukraine”) and the approval of cybersecurity strategy by Ukraine’s Cabinet of Ministers, it is arguable that cyber domain will take precedence over other strands of current political warfare.

**5. NATO Brussel Summit.**  
11 July 2018. Brussels Summit Declaration issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 11-12 July 2018.  
 - The Euro-Atlantic security environment has become less stable and predictable as a result of Russia’s illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea and ongoing destabilisation of eastern Ukraine,  
 - We reiterate our support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Ukraine, Georgia, and the Republic of Moldova within their internationally recognised borders,  
 - We urge Russia to cease all political, financial, and military support to militant groups and stop intervening militarily in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and to withdraw troops, equipment, and mercenaries from the territory of Ukraine,  
 - We stress the importance of the safety and full and unhindered access for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission, up to and including the Russia-Ukraine border,  
 - We stand firm in our support for Ukraine’s right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference,  
 - We welcome the developing cooperation between NATO and Ukraine on Black Sea security. We will also support Ukraine’s efforts to strengthen its resilience against hybrid threats,  
 - We highly value Ukraine’s significant contributions to Allied operations, the NATO Response Force, and NATO exercises, and welcome the contribution made by the NATO-Ukraine partnership to providing security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area and beyond,  
 - We will continue to work with Ukraine, a longstanding partner of the Alliance. (NATO OFFICIAL WEBSITE) <https://goo.gl/5cr5ge>

**6. Ukrainian Parliament calls for withdrawal from Azov Sea treaty with Russia.**  
11 July 2018. Ukrainian deputies introduced a bill to the Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) that would cancel the treaty between Russia and Ukraine on the joint use of the Azov Sea and the Kerch Strait. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/Eqs2Jg>

**7. Cabinet approves Ukraine's 2018 cybersecurity action plan.**  
11 July 2018. The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has approved an action plan for 2018 on the implementation of Ukraine's cybersecurity strategy including 18 tasks. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/NxnPCg>

**1. EU-Ukraine summit.**

09 July 2018. The EU and Ukraine reaffirmed their strong partnership based on their association agreement and discussed how to move it forward. EU and Ukraine leaders pledged to strengthen the political association and economic integration of Ukraine with the EU. Main results focus on following issues:

- Implementation of the association agreement,
- Ukrainian reform process (skills development, energy efficiency, cyber security, disinformation),
- Illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol. (EUROPEAN COUNCIL)

<https://goo.gl/adHjPF>

**2. EU draws red lines round Ukraine.**

10 July 2018. The EU has roundly criticised Russian aggression in Ukraine amid concern that US leader Donald Trump might break Western ranks. Russia should "immediately release" Ukrainian political prisoners, EU Council chairman Donald Tusk said in Brussels on Monday, highlighting the human cost of the conflict. (EU OBSERVER) <https://goo.gl/qwlpWW>

**3. Russian Defense Minister rules out direct military conflict with Ukraine.**

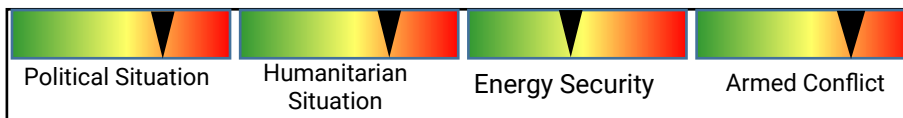
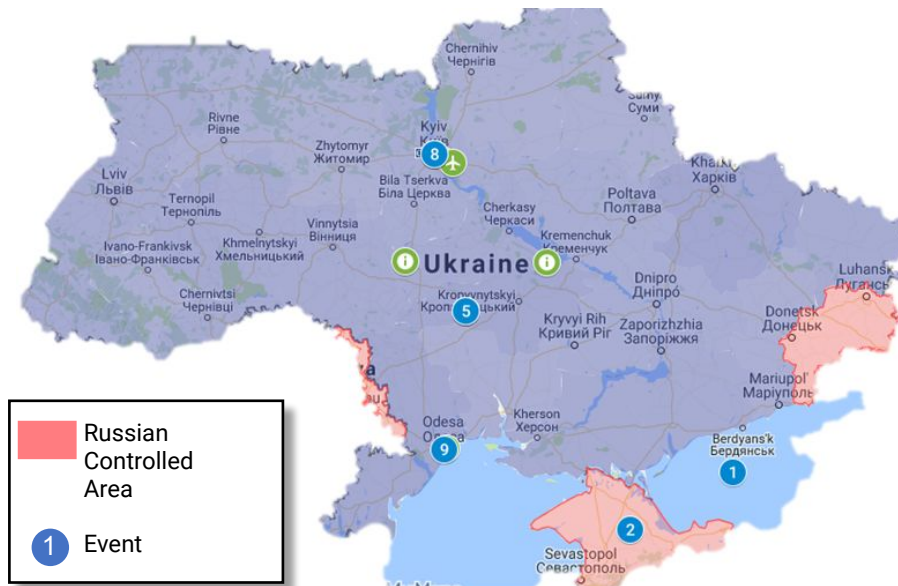
11 July 2018. Defense Minister Sergey Shoygu has ruled an armed standoff with Ukraine out as “impossible” but added that violations of Minsk Accords by Kiev could aggravate the crisis and lead to the “genocide” of ethnic Russians in Donbass. “I consider it impossible that a direct clash emerges between Russia and Ukraine,” Shoygu stated in his interview. (RT) <https://goo.gl/Tpy7WE>

**4. EU calls on Ukraine to fully implement national security law .**

11 July 2018. "The European Union welcomes the adoption of the Law on National Security as an important step towards bringing Ukraine's security sector closer to European principles and standards. The Law provides an important basis for further reform of the Security Service of Ukraine, which should now be advanced and completed," the EU said. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/X6nQ4j>

# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

## (02-08 JULY 18)



### Assessment:

- Considering the official statements of Ukraine, Russia, US and EU, status quo in Crimea will likely to remain unchanged in the foreseeable future.
- Putin's naming Russian army units after Ukraine's cities may be seen as an explicit indication of on-going "information warfare", a key item for Hybrid Warfare.
- Ukraine's strong desire towards NATO membership is being materialized by solid steps such as the new law on increasing its Armed Forces' NATO interoperability.
- The results of NATO and the EU-Ukraine summits may strengthen Trump's hand in Trump-Putin meeting on 16 July by showing solidarity and continuous support to Ukraine against Russia.

**6. The transition of the defense and security sector of Ukraine to the NATO standards up to the future membership in the Alliance was schematized.**

05 July 2018. President Petro Poroshenko particularly emphasizes the positions on Ukraine's integration into the European structures clearly reflected in the new Law "On the National Security of Ukraine". "This is our return to the European family of nations, to the European political, economic, security, legal space, up to becoming a member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization" (PRESIDENCY OFFICIAL WEBSITE) <https://goo.gl/G2gtrG>

**7. Crimea, Donbas and Nord Stream 2 to be discussed at session of OSCE PA.**

06 July 2018. About 300 MPs from Europe, North America and Asia will take part in the session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, which will be held in Berlin on July 7-11. The delegation of Ukraine on the margins of the session plans to hold two side events on key issues: "The impact of the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine on the environment" and "Nord Stream 2 and the impact on the OSCE member states". (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/XPHVg3>

**8. U.S. welcomes Ukraine's new law on national security.**

07 July 2018. The United States welcomes the law on Ukraine's national security adopted by the Verkhovna Rada and signed by President Petro Poroshenko. "The law is consistent with Western principles and provides a framework for increasing the Ukrainian Armed Forces' NATO interoperability". (A statement posted on the official website of the U.S. State Department) (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/us3UNU>

**9. Two US Navy ships enter Black Sea to take part in Sea Breeze-2018.**

08 July 2018. On July 7, USS Mount Whitney, an American Navy flagship, entered the Black Sea to participate in the joint Ukrainian-American exercise Sea Breeze-2018. Romanian and Turkish Navy ships, Moldavian and Georgian sailors and special forces from Britain and Canada will also arrive in Ukraine. This year, the exercise will be conducted on July 9-21. (112 UA NEWS AGENCY) <https://goo.gl/d1eGtX>

**10. EU prolongs economic sanctions against Russia by six months.**

05 July 2018. On 5 July 2018, the Council prolonged economic sanctions targeting specific sectors of the Russian economy until 31 January 2019. (EU) <https://goo.gl/7kMy2A>

**1. Russia's Blockade of Azov Sea Ports is a Problem.**

02 July 2018. In addition to the war in Ukraine's east that has left over 10,000 dead, Russia is leading another war in its neighboring country. And this is all taking off near the Ukrainian coast of the Azov Sea. Despite the fact not a single drop of blood has been shed in this conflict, it could lead to serious unprecedented damage to Ukraine's economy. (HROMADSKIE) <https://goo.gl/sc5rJS>

**2. Donald Trump declares sanctions will REMAIN on Russia until it 'RETURNS Crimea to Ukraine'.**

03 July 2018. DONALD Trump said he will not lift Russian sanctions until Russian president Vladimir Putin "returns the Crimea" ahead of a crunch meeting between the pair on July 16. Dmitri Peskov, a spokesman for Vladimir Putin, said the status of the Crimea "cannot and will never be on the agenda because it is an inseparable part of Russia". (EXPRESS) <https://goo.gl/TKxo63>

**3. Ukraine seeks to boost ties with Russian ally Serbia.**

03 July 2018. Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko met Tuesday with his Serbian counterpart in a bid to boost ties with the Balkan country, a key Russian ally in Europe, as both states seek to join the European Union. Poroshenko and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said their countries respect each other's territorial integrity and want to cooperate in both countries' efforts at EU membership. (THE WASHINGTON POST) <https://goo.gl/249Utt>

**4. Putin assigns the names of "occupied" Ukrainian cities to Russian army units.**

04 July 2018. By assigning the names of Ukrainian cities to the Russian army units, Putin is trying to form among citizens of the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In other words, it is another attempt by Putin to emphasize that Ukrainians and Russians are one nation with a common history. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/tFKGAM>

**5. Association Agreement, support for Ukraine to be discussed at Ukraine-EU summit.**

04 July 2018. At the 20th EU-Ukraine Summit in Brussels on July 9, the sides will discuss the implementation of the Association Agreement and the Minsk agreements and the support for the state under the conditions of Russian aggression. (UKRINFORM) <https://goo.gl/ZYeV9z> (EU) <https://goo.gl/adHjPF>



# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

## (25 JUNE-01 JULY 18)

### 1. Bill on 'migration amnesty' for Ukrainians from Donbas, Crimea tabled in Russia's Duma.

25 June 2018. A draft law on the so-called migration amnesty for citizens of Ukraine from temporarily occupied areas of Donbas and Crimea has been registered in Russia's State Duma. It is designed to legalize "temporary refugees from Ukraine" through "migration amnesty." (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/G34vm1>

### 2. Putin might ask Trump to decide on Ukraine behind Kyiv's back.

27 June 2018. Russian President Vladimir Putin at his upcoming meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump will probably seek, as it happened before, to solve the Ukraine issue without having Kyiv at the negotiating table, that's according to U.S. Senator Rob Portman. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/hPaGmn>

### 3. Ukrainian s show stable support of European integration.

27 June 2018. Public support for Ukraine's accession to the European Union and NATO remains on a sustainable level, according to a survey conducted by Rating Sociological Group. Thus, 51% of respondents expressed their support for Ukraine's accession to the EU, while 29% opposed the potential move. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/nnThga>

### 4. Poroshenko lifts restrictions on arms imports for defense ministry.

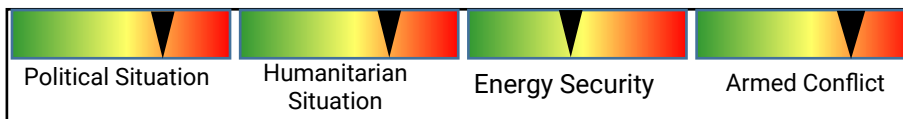
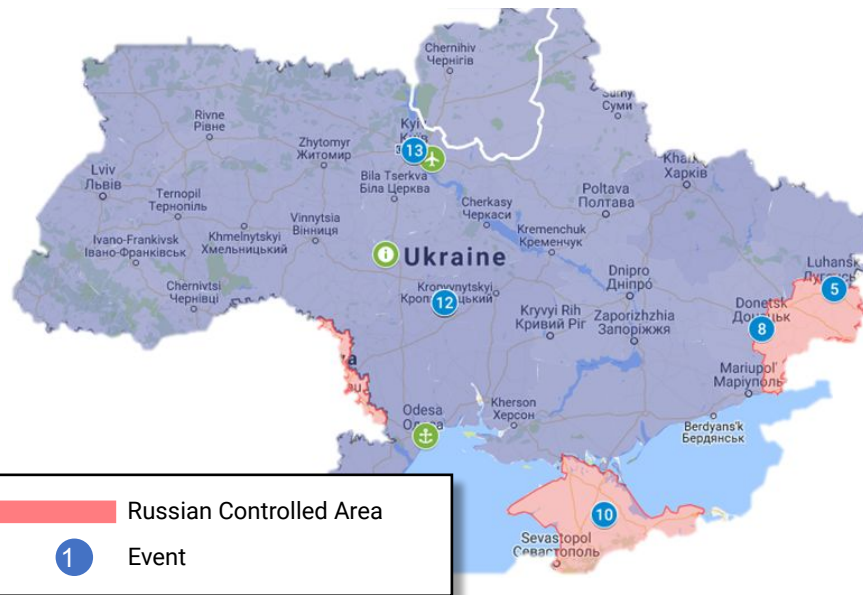
27 June 2018. Exports of own defense products shall be allowed for all arms manufacturers without the mediation of state-owned specialized companies. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/Bd2yVg>

### 5. Moscow rejects Ukrainian offer on deploying OSCE observers along uncontrolled border section.

27 June 2018. Ukraine's envoy to the Trilateral Contact Group, Yevhen Marchuk, says the Russian side at the negotiations in Minsk categorically rejects Ukraine's proposal on the introduction of monitoring by the observers of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission (SMM) over the uncontrolled section of the Russian-Ukrainian border in the occupied part of Donbas. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/FnREX1>

### 6. Ukraine says Russian hackers preparing massive strike.

27 June 2018. Hackers from Russia are infecting Ukrainian companies with malicious software to create "back doors" for a large, coordinated attack. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/EKRRKj>



### Assessment:

- The refusal of Russia on introduction of the observers of the OSCE SMM over the uncontrolled section of the Russian-Ukrainian border justifies EU's implementation of the sanctions against Russia.
- The views of U.S. President Donald Trump about Moscow's return to rejoin the G8 "without giving Crimea back to Ukraine" may deepen the divergence between EU and U.S. on European security.
- Despite the rapprochement between Russia and the West, Russian hackers' activities against Ukrainian companies and the Russian military presence in Belarus might be the indications for further Russian aggression .

### 7. EU leaders agree to extend economic sanctions on Russia.

28 June 2018. European Union leaders agreed on Friday to extend their economic sanctions against Russia for annexing Crimea from Kiev and backing rebels fighting government troops in east Ukraine, an EU official said. The decision will prolong EU's curbs on doing business with Russian banking, financial and energy sectors for six months until the end of January. (REUTERS) <https://goo.gl/6LBhLh>

### 8. Volker on Donbas: Neither civil war nor ethnic conflict, it's a state-to-state conflict.

28 June 2018. The United States has proposed – along with France and Germany and Ukraine and others – that there be a deployment of a UN mandated peacekeeping force. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/GMCCMB>

### 9. Ukrainian Intelligence Services: Belarus is a potential springboard for Russian invasion.

28 June 2018. The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense considers Belarus to be a possible springboard for a Russian invasion. Ukrainian intelligence is keeping an eye on all operations arranged by Russia on the territory of Belarus. (UAWIRE) <https://goo.gl/yxXT5f>

### 10. U.S. says Russia could return to G7 without giving Crimea back to Ukraine.

29 June 2018. With a Trump-Putin Helsinki summit set to be held July 16, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo says that President Donald Trump views Moscow's return to the international fold as inevitable and that "trade-offs" could allow it to rejoin the Group of Seven club of industrialized democracies without giving Crimea back to Ukraine. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/qk1rB2>

### 11. Ukraine ready to hand over 23 Russians in exchange for 23 Ukrainian political prisoners, says Ukraine's Ombudsperson.

29 June 2018. Ukraine is ready to transfer to Russia 23 Russian citizens in exchange for 23 Ukrainian political prisoners illegally detained or convicted and serving their terms in Russian prisons. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/e5P9mK>

### 12. Senior Russian senator says EU's sanctions used by Kiev to justify violation of Minsk Accords.

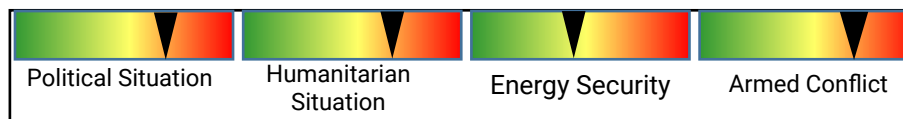
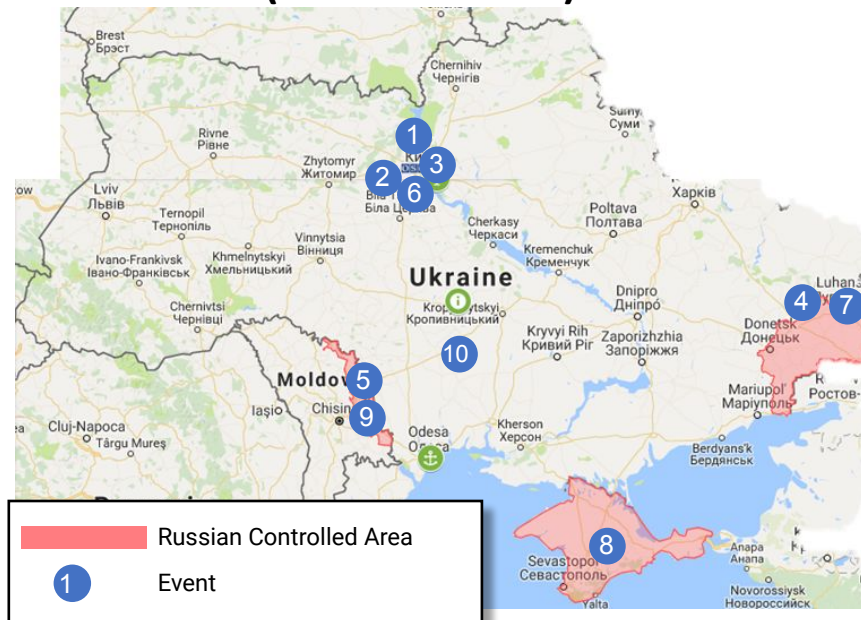
29 June 2018. The sole purpose of the extension of anti-Russian sanctions by the European Union is justifying the violation of Minsk Accords by the Kiev regime. (RT) <https://goo.gl/QaXW2M>

### 13. Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine May Take Russia to Court.

29 June 2018. In the near future, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia may file a joint suit against Russia. "But before that it will be necessary for the international community to assess the losses of the above-mentioned countries from the occupation of territories and form a judicial case against the Kremlin." (GEORGIA TODAY) <https://goo.gl/84rM59>

# UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH

(18-24 JUNE 18)



**Assessment:**

- The armed clashes between Ukrainian forces and Russian backed militants will highly likely continue in Donbas region in the short/middle term as it turns out to be another frozen conflict.
- Due to being a permanent member of UN, Russia is taking a tough stance against UN decisions and may go on proving itself as an indispensable element in creating a new multipolar, polycentric world.
- Approval of the “Bill on National Security of Ukraine” by Verkhovna Rada (Supreme Council of Ukraine) opening the road for Ukraine to the membership of both European Union and NATO will likely trigger new hybrid responses of Russia in the short term.
- Some European countries’ priorities concerning energy security will likely continue to contradict with Ukraine’s immediate interests.

**1. Ukraine may become NATO member in five years.**

22 June 2018. Ukrainian MP, Secretary of the Verkhovna Rada National Security and Defense Committee Ivan Vinnyk says Ukraine may become a member of NATO in five years, as the law "On National Security of Ukraine," adopted by Ukraine's parliament on June 21, opens the way for Ukraine to the Alliance. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/xm5mEx>

**2. Putin: Guterres did not discuss release of Ukrainian political prisoners.**

20 June 2018. Russian President's Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov says Russian President Vladimir Putin and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres did not discuss the release of Ukrainian political prisoners at a recent meeting in Moscow. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/159yd6>

**3. Ukraine Parliament passes National Security Bill.**

22 June 2018. The Verkhovna Rada adopted Bill "On National Security of Ukraine". The bill defines the principles of state policy on national security and defense. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/qub6QN>

**4. Russia-led forces violate ceasefire in Donbas three times.**

22 June 2018. Russia's hybrid military forces mounted seven attacks on Ukrainian army positions in Donbas on Wednesday. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/YxLuA5>

**5. UNGA approves resolution on Russian military withdrawal from Transnistria.**

22 June 2018. The United Nations General Assembly has called on the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the Transnistrian region of Moldova, according to Ukraine's Permanent Representative to the UN Volodymyr Yelchenko. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/vQWnki>

**6. Forget sanctions, G7 & Assad-Trump-Putin summit should focus on America’s Ukraine interference.**

22 June 2018. Ukraine, not Syria, is going to be in the spotlight at the potential meeting between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin after the US supplied Kiev with Javelin missiles and imposed sanctions on Russia. (RT) <https://goo.gl/59qmVo>

**7. Russian, Ukrainian presidents discuss Donbass settlement and prisoner exchange by phone.**

22 June 2018. The Russian president expressed concern over reports of new civilian casualties in Donbass during a telephone call with his Ukrainian counterpart. He also stated that the Minsk Accords were the only way to a peaceful settlement. (RT) <https://goo.gl/uXpX9J>

**8. EU extends sanctions against Russia for a year over Crimea.**

18 June 2018. The European Union has extended sanctions against Russia for a year over Crimea. The EU said in a statement on Monday that it “remains firmly committed to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity.” (RT) <https://goo.gl/7jTBQa>

**9. Transnistria should become integral part of Moldova.**

23 June 2018. Ukraine and its partners are working consistently to ensure that the Russian troops pull back from Transnistria, according to Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Pavlo Klimkin. (UNIAN) <https://goo.gl/PBP6LN>

**10. We are creating group in EU to stop Nord Stream 2.**

18 June 2018. Ukrainian authorities are creating a group in the European Union, which task is to stop building of the second section of the Russian Nord Steam 2 gas pipeline bypassing Ukraine. (INTERFAX) <https://goo.gl/ZjhgEh>