UKRAINE CRISIS WATCH
Russia-Ukraine Conflict
(20 Apr - 26 Apr 2020)

KEY EVENTS

1. NATO expansion plans prevent Transnistrian issue from being resolved, says Lavrov
20.04.2020 The Transnistrian issue would have been solved long ago, if some participants in the “5+2” negotiations (Moldova and Transnistria as parties, the conflict, Russia and Ukraine as guarantors and mediators, the OSCE as a mediator, the US and the EU as observers) did not pursue the objective to reinforce NATO. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said. (TASS)

2. Ex-Georgian president Saakashvili poised for another political comeback in Ukraine
21.04.2020 The former president of Georgia, Mikhail Saakashvili, said on Wednesday he had been invited to become deputy prime minister of Ukraine in charge of driving reforms, in what would mark another comeback for the maverick politician. (REUTERS)

3. Foreign ministers to confer on Ukraine peace efforts
21.04.2020 German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said he will hold a video conference next week with his Russian, Ukrainian and French counterparts to try to secure progress in efforts to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine. (AP)

4. Fires near Chernobyl pose ‘no risk to human health’, IAEA says
23.04.2020 Radiation from fires that have torn through forests around Ukraine’s defunct Chernobyl nuclear power plant poses “no risk to human health”, the U.N. atomic agency said on Friday, based on data provided by Ukraine. (REUTERS)

5. Ukraine’s debt repayments on track despite coronavirus, finance minister says
23.04.2020 Ukraine will pay its external debts on time in 2020 despite a looming recession caused by the coronavirus pandemic, the new finance minister told Reuters on Friday. Serhiy Marchenko said the government had no plans to tap capital markets again this year but was relying on aid from the IMF and other overseas institutions to meet its obligations. (REUTERS)

6. Putin signs law allowing foreigners to become Russian WITHOUT giving up existing citizenship
22.04.2020 The upcoming talks of the Normandy Four foreign ministers (Russia, Germany, Ukraine, France) in the video format are unlikely to bring results, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview with Bolshaya liga (“Big Game”) program on Russia’s Channel One. (TASS)

7. Lavrov does not expect results Normandy Four talks
24.04.2020 The upcomin the Kremlin’s line. Moreover, the people of Crimea have spent more than six years under a heavy barrage of Russian TV propaganda without easy access to alternative sources. To highlight the alleged happiness of some as others in Crimea are abducted, imprisoned, or murdered hardly seems ethical. (FOREIGN AFFAIRS)

8. The Peril of Polling in Crimea
20.04.2020 There is no free environment in Crimea in which one can express political views, especially if those views contradict the Kremlin’s line. (TASS)

9. From virtual candidate to compromised president: Zelensky’s tough first year
22.04.2020 Volodymyr Zelensky was an absolute political beginner when he won the Ukrainian presidency in April 2019 with a landslide victory over incumbent Petro Poroshenko. His victory was interpreted by most Ukrainians as the chance of a fresh start for the war-weary and poverty-stricken country. The majority of Zelensky’s supporters saw his election bid as protest vote against Ukraine’s deeply discredited political old guard and hoped he would “drain the Ukrainian political swamp”. (ATLANTIC COUNCIL)

10. Does Putin want peace?
22.04.2020 The first indication that Russia was not ready to play nice came in the immediate aftermath of Zelensky’s election. Just three days after the vote, Putin announced plans to issue passports to millions of Ukrainian citizens in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine. This ploy promised to transform the regions into “passport protectorates”, creating a pretext for endless Russian interference and making any future attempts at reintegration into Ukraine hugely problematic. (ATLANTIC COUNCIL)

11. Zelensky’s First Year: He Promised Sweeping Changes. How’s He Doing?
24.04.2020 The moment is captured in a slickly produced 50-minute video released by his office on April 21, the anniversary of the election. More of a public-relations piece than a documentary film, it sometimes resembles the sitcom and shines an uncritical light on Zelensky’s first year in office. (RFE/RL)