



Struggle-La-Lucha.org

# On sixth anniversary, Ukraine's war on Donbass takes ominous turn

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Donbass residents surround invading Ukrainian tank in April 2014.

Late in the afternoon of April 9, 25-year-old hotel worker [Miroslava Vorontsova was killed](#) by a Ukrainian military drone strike on the front-line town of Gorlovka in the Donetsk People's Republic. A 59-year-old neighbor was seriously wounded in the blast.

The drone strike occurred while Ukrainian military units and neo-Nazi “volunteer battalions” shelled the town's outskirts with traditional weaponry — a regular occurrence — despite a ceasefire under the international Minsk Agreements.

Vorontsova is believed to be the first casualty of Ukrainian drone warfare. Up till

now, Kiev has used drones only for spying missions over the independent Donetsk and Lugansk republics of the Donbass mining region, to seek out targets for bombing and assassination.

April 14 marks the sixth anniversary of Ukraine's war against the residents of Donbass. In the midst of a deadly global pandemic that has caused [violent panic inside Ukraine](#), the adoption of "remote control killing" by President Vladimir Zelensky sounds an ominous new note in a war that has cost more than 13,000 lives, according to the United Nations.

### **Coup regime targets workers**

On April 14, 2014, less than two months after a U.S.-backed coup d'état overthrew the elected government of Ukraine, tanks rolled into the country's eastern Donbass region to attack civilian protesters. People in the multinational, working-class, predominantly Russian-speaking mining area had overwhelmingly rejected the new government headed by pro-Western politicians, oligarchs and neo-Nazis under the umbrella of right-wing Ukrainian nationalism. Local residents held mass protests and took over local and regional government buildings.

Soon Kiev sent fighter planes to bomb the regional capital of Lugansk. Heavy weaponry was directed against the capital of Donetsk and other population centers.

The popular uprising in Kharkov was repressed. In the port city of Odessa, fascists bused in from the West slaughtered at least 48 local activists trapped in the burning House of Trade Unions on May 6.

This was the last straw for Donbass residents, who voted overwhelmingly in a referendum on May 19, 2014, to declare independence from Ukraine. They established the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. Locals established popular militias to defend their homes, and supporters from across Ukraine, other parts of

the former Soviet Union and beyond came to help them.

In early 2015, the popular militias scored a decisive military victory when they encircled the demoralized and ill-equipped Ukrainian forces and liberated the embattled town of Debaltsevo.

Since then, Ukraine's forces have been unable to carry out a successful military offensive against the people's republics. But they continue to routinely launch heavy artillery attacks on front-line towns and cities, often killing and maiming civilians and causing costly damage to civilian 'infrastructure.

### **U.S.-NATO upgrade Ukrainian forces**

Since the ignominious defeat of Ukraine's military by the poorly armed but highly motivated people's militias in 2015, the U.S. and its NATO military alliance have worked to steadily upgrade Ukraine's military technology and organization. The death-dealing killer drone that stole Miroslava Vorontsova's life is but one example.

Despite intense repression, including the jailing of thousands of political prisoners and assassinations of opponents, Ukraine was wracked by anti-war protests when soldiers were being sent into combat in the eastern regions.

U.S. military and political bosses had already learned to deal with this problem using remote-controlled drone attacks. These caused the maximum carnage to "enemies" with minimal danger to U.S. troops.

Murder by drone [first became routine](#) under the government of Republican George W. Bush, as part of the so-called "War on Terror." Under Democrat Barack Obama, who wielded a widely publicized "kill list," drone attacks [grew 10-fold](#).

As with so many other policies of repression and austerity, the bipartisan drone war directly laid the basis for the policies of Donald Trump.

It should be noted that Obama's vice president and now presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, Joe Biden, served as the unofficial colonial governor of Ukraine. He shuttled back and forth between Washington and Kiev frequently, wielding both carrot and stick to encourage repression and austerity measures against Ukrainian workers and harsh war against Donbass.

## **Zelensky, U.S. and Nazis**

Most people in the U.S. first heard of Ukrainian President Zelensky during the impeachment proceedings against Donald Trump. Trump reportedly twisted Zelensky's arm and temporarily withheld aid for dirt on Biden's very real dirty dealings in Ukraine.

Zelensky was elected last year in very unfree elections that excluded opponents of the 2014 coup. Many Ukrainians voted for him in the hopes that he would make peace with Donbass and reverse the worst excesses of his predecessor, Petro Poroshenko.

But Zelensky, a former TV comedian, is equally beholden to the coalition of far-right forces that wield the true power in Ukraine on behalf of U.S. and European Union imperialism. In fact, military attacks have increased under his administration. Two days after Miroslava Vorontsova's death, [Zelensky was photographed](#) on a tour of the front lines wearing a military jacket with the emblem of a neo-Nazi group modeled on the German SS "Totenkopf" Division, which he received last year.

## **Take action!**

In response to an appeal by the [Communist Party of the Donetsk People's Republic](#) for solidarity actions to mark the war anniversary on April 14, Struggle-La Lucha newspaper has joined with others to call for an ["Online Day of Action to Fight Covid-19 Not Donbass."](#)

Readers are encouraged to take a selfie while holding a sign calling for an end to the war and blockade of Donetsk and Lugansk. Post the photo on social media with the hashtags [#StopWarOnDonbass](#) and [#FightCovid19NotDonbass](#). Send a copy of your photo to [solidarityukraineantifa at gmail dot com](mailto:solidarityukraineantifa@gmail.com).

Also, send emails of protest to Ukrainian Ambassador to the U.S. Volodymyr Yelchenko <[emb\\_us@mfa.gov.ua](mailto:emb_us@mfa.gov.ua)>, U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine Kristina Kvien <[kyivacs@state.gov](mailto:kyivacs@state.gov)>, former Vice President Joe Biden <<https://go.joe Biden.com/page/s/contact-us>> and President Donald Trump <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>>.

Sample text for email: “April 14 marks six years since Ukraine’s illegal war on the people of Donbass began with U.S. assistance. More than 13,000 people have been killed. These war crimes must end! I demand an immediate end to U.S. financial, political and military aid to the Ukrainian government and its allied far-right groups. End the bombing and blockade of the Donbass region immediately. Recognize the Donetsk and Lugansk People’s Republics and adhere to the Minsk Agreements.”

