



A group of members of the Ukrainian Parliament and the Chairman of Verkhovna Rada have addressed parliaments of the free world with an open letter about the deteriorating situation in Eastern Ukraine

**To the Parliaments of the EU Member States, USA, Canada and Japan,
and to the European Parliament**

Fellow Parliamentarians,

We urge you to pay attention and to act as regards the worsening situation in Eastern Ukraine. We must reiterate that Russia, as the aggressor country, has not renounced its continuous course aiming to escalate conflict in the temporarily occupied parts of Donbas. This is proven by a critical situation, which has emerged during the past days and which is turning into a humanitarian disaster as a result of systematic attacks by illegal armed groups near the town of Avdiivka in the Donetsk Region.

On 29 January 2017, the militants violated the ceasefire and attacked the Armed Forces of Ukraine in Avdiivka using different types of weapons, including those prohibited by the Minsk agreements such as Grad multiple rocket launchers, 152 mm and 122 mm artillery, 120 mm and 82 mm mortars, as well as tanks and small arms. In just two days, eight Ukrainian soldiers were killed with Russian weapons and 26 soldiers were wounded. Yet, this attack touched the civilian population as well - two people were killed during the shelling of residential areas.

We would like to draw your attention to the critical situation that has developed in Avdiivka due to the systematic shelling by the Russia-backed militants. As a result of fighting, power supply lines and a number of infrastructure objects have been damaged leading to disruptions in water supply and heating. During the past days, in Avdiivka the air temperature has dropped below -18 degrees. On the night of January 31 a state of emergency was declared in the town.

Over 22,000 people are left without electricity, water and heating. The emergency services have started evacuating children and disabled persons from Avdiivka.

Respective Ukrainian authorities put up all efforts to help the civilian population in arranging water supply, electric generators and necessities. However, due to the worsening weather conditions and the constant deterioration of the security situation near Avdiivka, the town is on the verge of a humanitarian disaster.

Destruction of the infrastructure, caused by the actions of the Russian Federation, is threatening the environmental safety in the Donetsk region and may lead to the further deterioration of living conditions.

In order to improve the situation in Avdiivka, it is necessary to start repairing the damaged infrastructure immediately. However, the militants' continuous shelling prevents the repair works and the situation deteriorates even further.

We strongly condemn such actions of the Russian Federation and appeal to our fellow parliamentarians to pressure Russia to make it stop firing and destabilizing the situation in the Donetsk region. Once there is a ceasefire, Ukrainian authorities will be able to begin repair works in Avdiivka.

Moreover, the security crisis in Avdiivka has emphasized the importance of increased presence of international organizations in order to ensure monitoring the situation and as well as calls for immediate deployment of an armed OSCE police mission in the Donetsk region.

The crimes committed by the Russia-backed militants against civilians in Avdiivka have once again proved that only strict sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation and the international consolidation of efforts can stop the escalation of the armed conflict in the Eastern Ukraine.

Therefore, it is important to intensify pressure on the aggressor country together until peace is fully established and territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored.

We, the parliamentarians, are writing to you with the request to use all available tools of

governmental and inter-parliamentary diplomacy and increase the pressure on the Kremlin.

We will be grateful if the leadership of your parliaments publicly calls upon the Russian authorities to fulfill all their international obligations and to stop the deliberate aggravation of the security and humanitarian situation in Donbas.

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Source: [Website](#) of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

