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## **Humanitarian situation in the separatist regions of Eastern Ukraine**

HRWF (31.10.2020) – A report about the humanitarian situation in the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk has recently been published by Olga Aleksandrovskaya (Democracy Development Initiative).

This report entitled “Overview of humanitarian situation in the non-government controlled areas of Donbass amid the global pandemic of coronavirus infection COVID-19” is said by the author to have been made possible by two friends of her

organizations, Mr. John DeBlasio (GPD Charitable Trust: <https://gpdcharitabletrust.org>) and Mr. Joel Ray Montgomery (New Media Development Group).

The main objective was to see how the global pandemic of coronavirus infection COVID-19 affects the lives of Ukrainians living in the separatist regions of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in Ukraine. The proposed analysis is based on the author's personal experience from her trip to these regions that she names by the acronym of ORDLO for "Occupied Regions of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts" from September 20 to October 20, 2020, conversations with residents of Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, as well as information obtained from open sources – Ukrainian, Russian and "republican" media.

The report comprises of the following sections:

CORONAVIRUS AND QUARANTINE IN ORDLO

PASSPORT REGIME IN ORDLO

CURRENCY OPERATIONS IN ORDLO

CROSSING THE UKRAINIAN BORDER FROM ORDLO

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We are pleased to present you the full report on our website (<https://bit.ly/2Ty9XH1>) and an excerpt of it hereafter:

***Passport regime in ORDLO***

Authorities of the self-proclaimed republics are forcing residents of the non-government controlled territories to register in the electronic queue for obtaining LPR / DPR passports.

The passports of the republics are not accepted as a basis for crossing the border with the Russian Federation. I have repeatedly observed how Russian border guards would return a republican passport to a "citizen of the republic" and would demand an internal or foreign passport of a citizen of Ukraine: "DPR does not exist. Write in your migration card that you are a citizen of Ukraine and indicate the details of your Ukrainian passport."

Republican migration services are slow to issue passports. Today, the electronic queue for submitting documents for LPR / DPR passports dates all the way to the spring of 2023.

It is "mandatory" for civil servants, employees of educational institutions, medical workers, and pensioners to queue up to receive a republican passport – for everyone who receives budget money.

In the opinion of ORDLO residents, the electronic queue for obtaining a republican passport is an indirect population census. Also, a republican passport is the basis for obtaining Russian citizenship.

Many people understand that a passport of a citizen of the Russian Federation obtained in ORDLO is not recognized in the

world. Therefore, in order to “cheat” the system, some of them, having received an LPR / DPR passport, go to their friends and relatives in Russia, register for permanent residence there, and receive Russian citizenship according to a simplified system (with passports of LPR / DPR residents[1]).

Behind the scenes, the republics do not recognize the ID card of Ukraine (which, according to Ukrainian legislation, is issued to citizens of Ukraine upon reaching the age of 14 and in cases of loss or theft of an internal passport). “Citizens of the republics” with a Ukrainian ID card are admitted into and released from the territory of ORDLO if there is an address certificate confirming the place of registration on the territory of ORDLO (the place of registration is not indicated in the ID card). At the same time, according to the residents of the republics, it is difficult to obtain a “republican passport” for a holder of an ID card of Ukraine. “Our documents have been accepted, but application consideration is dragging on for the second year now. We are kind of “unreliable”...”

Also read on the website of IA OSTRO.ORG “Border guards of the Russian Federation confirmed that they will not allow Ukrainians with an ID card to cross the border”.[2]

Officially, the term for issuing republican passports is one calendar month from the date of submission of documents. In practice, the process is delayed indefinitely. Employees of the DNR migration service offer an unofficial service to speed up the procedure (jump over the electronic queue from spring 2023 to autumn 2020, submit documents and obtain a passport of a citizen of the DPR within a month). The price of the issue

“for reliability” is RUB 7,000 and the official state fee is RUB 250. The “service” became available relatively recently, in the summer of 2020. There is no information regarding the existence of such a “service” in the neighboring LPR.

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[1]

<https://www.rbc.ru/politics/24/04/2019/5cc043b09a79473f067eae71>

[2] <https://www.ostro.org/general/society/news/599332/>

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