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The Donetsk People's Republic and some EU blacklisted leaders

Who is who ?

By Willy Fautré

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The self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) were formed on 11 May 2014 on the territory of Donbass (Donetsk and Luhansk regions in Ukraine's southeastern industrial area) after referendums that were not recognized by the Ukrainian government and the international community. In response, Kiev started a military operation.

The first Minsk Peace Agreement signed on 5 September provided that the warring parties would agree

- to pull heavy weaponry 15 km by each side from the line of contact, creating a 30 km security zone
- to ban offensive operations
- to ban flights by combat aircraft over the security zone
- to set up an OSCE monitoring mission
- to withdraw all foreign mercenaries from the conflict zone

but this did not stop the war and further territorial expansion of the separatists.

In September 2014, the self-proclaimed republics unilaterally adopted laws on elections of the republics' heads and deputies of people's councils despite the opposition of the central government in Kyiv.

On the whole, 2.2 million people live in the Luhansk Region, and 4.3 million people reside in the Donetsk Region. The share of Russians in the population reaches 39-40% Both territories are centers of the coal, metallurgical and mechanical engineering industries.

Some EU-sanctioned separatist leaders and figures

The first DPR political leader was **Alexander Borodai**, a Russian citizen, from Moscow. He served as prime minister from 16 May 2014. He was succeeded by Alexander Zakharchenko on 7 August 2014.

Elections were held on 2 November 2014 and ten days later, the Head and Prime Minister of the Donetsk People's Republic **Alexander Zakharchenko** composed a new government.

The successive EU sanctions lists since April 2014 comprise numerous figures occupying or having occupied for some time official functions in the internationally unrecognized Donetsk People's Republic. Among them, here are a few names:

Alexander Borodai, prime minister (16 May-7 August 2014)

Alexander Vladimirovich Zakharchenko, prime minister (7 August – Now)

Vladimir Antyufeyev (Vadim Shevtsov), deputy prime minister (July 2014 – Now)

Alexander Sergeevich Khodakovsky, minister of state security (16 May – 16 July 2014)

Igor Girkin/ Strelkov, military chief (until August 2014)

Fyodor Berezin, deputy of Igor Strelkov
Serhii Zdriliuk, senior aid to Igor Strelkov
Igor Kakidzyanoz, commander-in-chief

Pavel Gubarev, self-styled “people’s governor”
Boris Litvinov, chairman of the supreme council
Ekaterina Gubareva, minister of foreign affairs
Ekaterina Filippova, minister of justice
Ihor Vladymyrovych Kostenok, minister of education
Alexander Timofeev, minister of budget
Evgeny Manuilov, minister of communications
Alexander Kofman, first deputy speaker of the parliament

Ravil Kahlikov, first deputy prime minister and previous prosecutor general
Yuriy Sivokononko, member of the parliament and of the Veterans’ Union of Donetsk Berkut
Yevgeniy Eduardovich Mikhaylov, head of the administration for governmental affairs
Yevgeniy Vyacheslavovich Orlov, member of the national council
Eduard Basurin, deputy commander of the ministry of defence

all of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic.

Alexander Yurevich Borodai, DPR Prime Minister (16 May - 7 August 2014)



Alexander Yurevich Borodai, a Russian citizen, was born in Moscow on 25 July 1972. Borodai has a degree in philosophy from Moscow State University. In 1994 he worked for the Russian news agency RIA Novosty as a military correspondent during the First Chechen War.

In 1996 he started working for newspaper *Zavtra*. Since 2001 he has headed the consulting business "Sotsionaster" specializing in crisis management.

Borodai became a political adviser to Sergey Aksyonov, the prime minister of the Republic of Crimea, after it seceded from Ukraine in early 2014. On 16 May 2014, he was appointed to the post of DPR Prime Minister from which he resigned on 7 August 2014.

When he announced his resignation, he said "I came here as a crisis manager, a 'startuper' if you wish. A lot was done in the past days, and DPR has proven itself as a state. I am a Muscovite. Donbass should be led by a genuine Donetsk native. Now I cede my place to a respected field commander, my friend Alexander Zakharchenko."

Borodai and DPR military commander Igor Strelkov were close associates of the controversial Russian businessmen Konstantin Malofeev against whom Ukraine opened a criminal case in July 2014 for allegedly financing "illegal military groups" in Eastern Ukraine. Malofeev was also put on the EU sanctions list and the US blacklist.

Alexander Zakharchenko, DPR Head and Prime Minister (7 August 2014 - Now)



Alexander Vladimirovich Zakharchenko (Russian: Алекса́ндр Влади́мирович Заха́рченко; Ukrainian: Олександр Володимирович Захарченко) was born on 26 June 1976 in Donetsk (then Ukrainian SSR, Soviet Union). He is a Ukrainian citizen and claims to be Orthodox. He was the leader of the Donetsk branch of the Oplot Battalion (Stronghold), a section of the Donbass People's Militia, which was active in helping the former Ukrainian government clamp down on the pro-democracy Maidan protests.

In interviews, Zakharchenko introduced himself as electrical engineer, while the BBC states that he graduated from technical school and worked as a mine electrician. Russian media say

that later he was a student at the law institute of Ukraine's interior ministry and also tried his hand at being a businessman.

He is the current Head (Chief Executive) and current Prime Minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic that declared its independence from Ukraine on 11 May 2014.

He succeeded Alexander Borodai as Prime Minister on 7 August 2014, and Borodai then reportedly became his Deputy Prime Minister.

On 24 July 2014, after being wounded in the arm fighting the Ukrainian Army, he was awarded the rank of Major by Igor Girkin (known as "Strelkov"), a Russian nationalist who has been playing a key role in the war in Donbass.

On 28 August, Zakharchenko admitted that thousands of Russian citizens, including many professional soldiers, were fighting alongside the separatists.

In September 2014, Zakharchenko was the lead negotiator for the Donbass People's Republic (DPR) at the Minsk Protocol. According to Zakharchenko's militants who organized the parliamentary elections in the Donbass separatist region on 2 November 2014, Zakharchenko won with 78.93% of the vote. In December 2014 he stated that he saw what happened to Malaysia Airlines Flight 17. In February, 2015 Zakharchenko, representing the DPR, agreed to the Minsk II peace treaty, calling it a "major victory for the Lugansk and Donetsk people's republics."

Vladimir Antyufeyev, DPR Deputy Prime Minister (July 2014 – Now)



Vladimir Antyufeyev (**Russian:** Владимир Антюфеев), also known under the assumed name **Vadim Shevtsov** was born on 19 February 1951 in Novosibirsk (Russian SSR). In 1974, he graduated from a police academy in Minsk (Bielorussian SSR).

In 1990-1991, he served as the commander of the Soviet OMON, a riot police and gendarmerie-like military force. He was one of the organizers of the attempt to overthrow the Latvian government in 1991. For this action the Latvian government accused Antyufeyev of "crimes against the state" in August 1991. He says he fled to Moscow two hours before he was to be arrested. He was for many years wanted by the law enforcement agencies of Latvia and Moldova. He is no longer wanted by the Latvians however due to their statute of limitations on the type of crime he was alleged to have committed.

In September 1991 he took part in the separatist movement fighting for the independence of Transnistria from Moldova. Adopting a new name, "Vadim Shevtsov," Antyufeyev created and headed the Ministry of State Security the internationally unrecognized self-declared Republic of Transnistria. Shevtsov's real identity was revealed by Alexander Lebed in 1997.

In 2003 Antyufeyev defended a doctoral thesis on "Russia's Geostrategy in the Southwest" at the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

In 2004, the Prosecutor of Moldova indicted Antyufeyev for crimes against the Moldovan state and freeing an officer accused of several assassinations. That same year, Vladimir Antyufeyev was declared persona non grata by the European Union.

Antyufeyev has stated that his life's purpose is to save Transnistria for Russia. In early 2012, he was dismissed by the newly elected president of Transnistria Yevgeny Shevchuk and a criminal investigation was launched against him, alleging abuse of power, misappropriation of public funds and destruction of documents.

Antyufeyev managed to flee to Moscow and lived there until the start of the Ukrainian crisis. He said he worked on security in South Ossetia, Abkhazia and Crimea. In July 2014, he appeared in eastern Ukraine as the "deputy prime minister" of the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). The then DPR head Alexander Borodai met him in Moscow and put him in charge of the state security (taking over from Alexander Khodakovsky) and courts of justice.

He is included in the EU asset freeze and travel ban imposed on 95 Russian individuals allegedly linked to the eastern Ukraine uprising.

Alexander Khodakovsky, minister of state security (16 May – 16 July 2014)



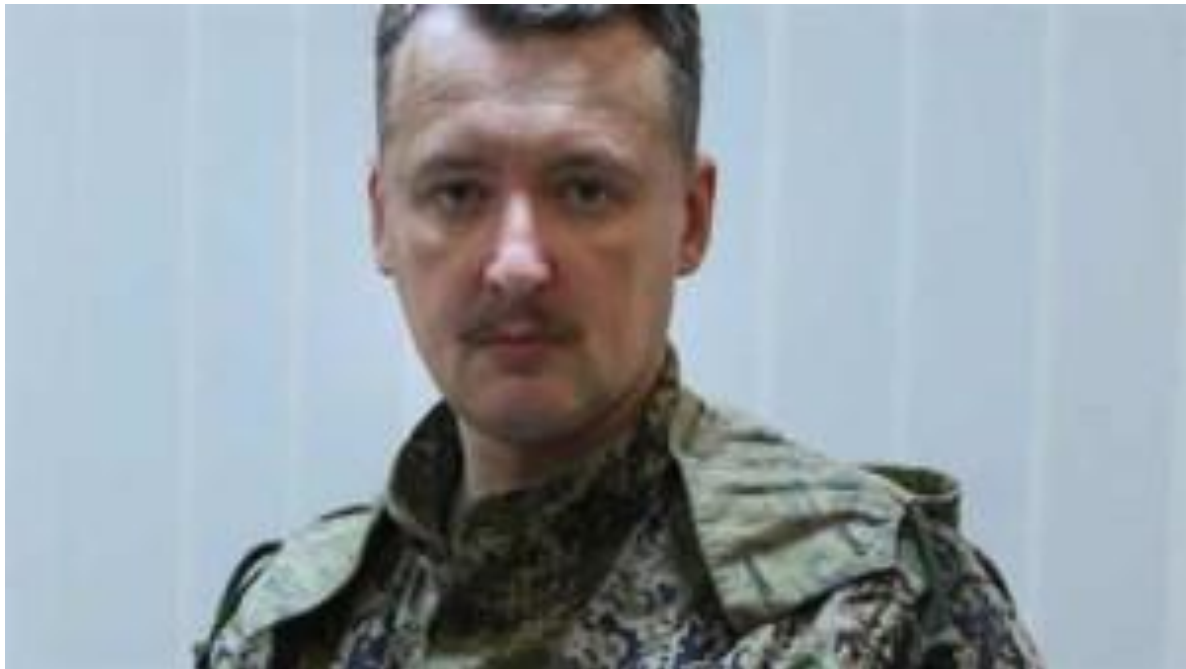
Alexander Sergeevich Khodakovsky was the commander of the pro-Russian Vostok (East) Battalion formed in early May 2014¹. Khodakovsky is a former commander of the Alpha special unit (elite counter-terrorism squad) of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU). In that capacity, he took an active part in President Yanukovich's attempt to overcome the Maidan protesters in Kyiv. What was his exact role in the protests has yet to be determined.

During the insurgency in Donbass, he left the Ukrainian state service and became the leader of the pro-Russian "Patriotic Forces of Donbass" in Donetsk Oblast. In the DPR government created on 16 May 2014, Khodakovsky held the post of minister of state security. On 16 July 2014, he was replaced by Vladimir Antyufeyev.

He was suspected of being involved in the shooting down of the Malaysia Airlines plane and attempts to avoid the "black box" flight recorders getting into the hands of investigators but he denied the accusations.

There were reports of tensions between Khodakovsky and Strelkov as until the appearance of Strelkov and his militia, Vostok was the leading military unit in Donetsk.

Igor Girkin, DPR military chief (until August 2014)



Igor Girkin (also known as *Strelkov*, which means "rifleman" in Russian), a retired Russian military officer, was the military chief of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Donetsk until August 2014. He is a veteran of both the Soviet and Russian armies. He told reporters he

¹ Khodakovsky's Vostok Battalion is one of a number of separatist militias in Donetsk. The others are: Oplot (commanded by Aleksander Zakhchrenko); the Russian Orthodox Army (Mikhail Verin); Kalmius; Rus; and Zarya.

was a military intelligence general and served in the FSB, the Russian security service that has a foundation in the KGB, until March 2013. This was never denied by Moscow.

Igor Girkin was born on 17 December 1970 in Moscow. He attended the Moscow State Institute for History and Archives. He was interested in military history and joined a small but active group of students who advocated a return to monarchy. He is an admirer of Mikhail Drozdovsky, a general of the White Guard that fought against the Bolsheviks in the Russian Civil War (1917-1922).

In a diary published in 1999, he says that he participated in several wars and conflicts: in Chechnya, Transnistria and Bosnia² (November 1992 and April 1993) where he fought in the 2nd Russian volunteer corps for General Ratko Mladic, a former Bosnian Serb military leader accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. Mladic was extradited on 31st May 2011 to The Hague to be tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Strelkov fought in Bosnia as part of a group of Russian monarchists known as the Tsar's Wolves, under the command of Mukharev. In his diary, Strelkov appears to distance himself from the Serb atrocities committed in Visegrad, saying he wanted to fight on behalf of ordinary Serbs. He went back to Russia in April 1993.

At the beginning of the war in Eastern Ukraine, Strelkov was considered one of the most powerful separatist figures in Eastern Ukraine. He then declared himself Minister of Defence of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic. He became a military star in Eastern Ukraine and in Russia.

Igor Strelkov who is widely believed to be responsible for the missile attack that shot down the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 which made 289 victims on 17 July 2014 delivered an impromptu press conference on 27 July in which he denied firing on the commercial jet.

In an interview published by *The Moscow Times* in November 2014³, Strelkov declared he triggered the war in eastern Ukraine after Russia's annexation of Crimea. He and the separatists thought Donetsk and Luhansk would follow the same scenario but he was disappointed by Moscow's reluctance to annex the conquered territories.

Strelkov stepped down from his position as a military chief in August 2014 and went back to Moscow in autumn of the same year.

The EU believes he works for Russian military intelligence (the GRU), and has placed him under sanctions. However, he has not been afraid to criticise Moscow, which he reproaches for failing to intervene directly in the conflict.

² For further details, see <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/igor-strelkovs-bosnian-diary-ukraine-separatist-leaders-1992-bloody-war-1458897>

³ The Moscow Times (21.11.2014): Russia's Igor Strelkov. I am responsible for war in Eastern Ukraine: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/russias-igor-strelkov-i-am-responsible-for-war-in-eastern-ukraine/511584.html>

Conclusions

Russia is obviously waging a proxy war in Donbass. An overview of the main figures conquering and administering parts of two Ukrainian oblasts for almost a year clearly shows that they are the hidden hands of Putin.

The first prime minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic, **Alexander Borodai**, is a Russian citizen from Moscow who had previously been involved in the conquest of Crimea.

He withdrew from his post, probably on Moscow's order, to give a more Ukrainian face to the insurgency as his successor, **Alexander Zakharenko**, was born in Donetsk.

However, Zakharenko's deputy prime minister, **Vladimir Antyufeyev**, was a main Soviet actor in the police operations attempting to crush down the independence movement in Latvia in 1990-1991. He subsequently contributed to the creation of the internationally unrecognized separatist Republic of Transnistria and was the minister of state security of it for 20 years. The next battlefield to which he was sent was Eastern Ukraine.

Igor Girkin (Strelkov), the military chief of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Donetsk until August 2014, was a retired military officer of both the Soviet and Russian armies. He had fought in Chechnya, Transnistria and Bosnia in a Russian volunteer corps for General Ratko Mladic, a former Bosnian Serb military leader accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

These are just a few names of henchmen used by Moscow and targeted by the EU, the United States and other countries which have adopted sanctions against a high number of persons who were and are active in the dismemberment of the Ukrainian territory.⁴

⁴ See such sanctions lists at :

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_individuals_sanctioned_during_the_Ukrainian_crisis

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:OJ.L_.2014.126.01.0048.01.ENG

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:02014R0269-20140912>

<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26672800>