



**War crimes of the armed forces
and security forces of Ukraine:
torture and inhumane treatment**

Second report

Cover photo: Ukrainian citizen Alexander Agafonov, tortured to death by SBU officers in Izyum on 14 November 2014.

Yana, victim's wife on SBU officials:

‘They have beaten him to death simply. When they came – they took him away to torture him. When they brought his body back – the heels were blue, the feet were blue. He’s got some traces of punctures on his hands... I don’t know... what they did to him, punctured him or drove the needles under his nails – there were holes on his hands. Each bone has a hole in it. They tortured him like... when there was a real war no one has tortured people the way they tortured him.’

**WAR CRIMES OF THE ARMED
FORCES AND SECURITY
FORCES OF UKRAINE:**

torture and inhumane treatment
Second report

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Introduction

‘War Crimes of the armed forces and security forces of Ukraine: torture and inhumane treatment (second report)’ was prepared by a non-state organization ‘The Foundation for The Study of Democracy’ (headed by M. Grigoriev) and the Russian Public Council for International Cooperation and Public Diplomacy (presided over by S. Ordzhonikidze) with the assistance of the Russian Peace Foundation (L. Slutsky, Y. Sutormina), S. Mamedov, I. Morozov, E. Tarlo, D. Savelyev, A. Chepa and other members of the Committee for Public Support of the Residents of Southeastern Ukraine.

The data that has been accumulated since the first report by the Foundation for Democracy Studies provides ground to conclude that torture and inhumane treatment inflicted by the Security Forces of Ukraine (SBU), by the Ukrainian armed forces, the National Guard and other formations within the Interior Ministry of Ukraine, as well as by illegal armed groups, such as Right Sector, have not only continued but are gaining in scale and are becoming systematic.

In order to investigate specific cases of torture, inhumane or degrading treatment, experts of the Foundation for Democracy Studies interviewed the ex-prisoners released by the Ukrainian side. This report includes the results of interviews with over 200 prisoners released by the Ukrainian side. The interviews were conducted by experts of the Foundation during the period from 25 August 2014 to 20 January 2015.

The prisoners were electrocuted, beaten cruelly and for multiple days in a row with different objects (iron bars, baseball bats, sticks, rifle butts, bayonet knives, rubber batons).

Techniques widely used by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces include waterboarding, strangling with a 'Banderist garrotte' and other types of strangling.

In some cases prisoners, for the purposes of intimidation, were sent to minefields and run over with military vehicles, which led to their death.

Other torture methods used by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces include bone-crashing, stabbing and cutting with a knife, branding with red-hot objects, shooting different body parts with small arms.

The prisoners taken captive by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces are kept for days at freezing temperatures, with no access to food or medical assistance, and are often forced to take psychotropic substances that cause agony.

An absolute majority of prisoners are put through mock firing squads and suffer death and rape threats to their families.

Many of those tortured are not members of the self-defense forces of the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics (DPR and LPR)¹.

As the European Court of Human Rights opined, the Convention on Human Rights prohibits in absolute terms torture, irrespective of other circumstances. Moreover, it is assumed in the law of the European Union that 'the State is responsible for the actions of all of its agencies, such as the police, security forces, other law enforcement officials, and any other State bodies who hold an individual under their control, whether they act under orders, or on their own accord.' Unlike other clauses of the Convention related to rights, Article 3 makes no provision for derogation (reservations) in the event of a war or any other emergency threatening national security. Article 15 (2)

¹ This report indicates if the person who was tortured is a member of the self-defense forces of the DPR or LPR.

explicitly states, that there can be no derogation from Article 3 within the Convention¹.

The information collected by the Foundation for Democracy Studies gives grounds to believe that the Ukrainian armed forces (VSU), the National Guard and other military units of the Ministry of the Interior of Ukraine, as well as the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) systematically and on purpose violate Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights that reads, 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.'

The extent to which torture is being used and the fact that this is done systematically prove that torture is an intentional strategy of the said institutions, authorized by their leadership.

¹ Council of Europe, Interights, Prohibition of Torture, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment under the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 3).

PART I.

Methods and circumstances
of torture committed
by the Ukrainian armed forces
and security forces

An overwhelming majority of prisoners held by the Ukrainian side are brutally and systematically beaten.

Here is, for example, an account by one of the torture victims, Robert Aniskin, 'I had not taken part in the military actions and I had not enrolled in the self-defense forces, nor had I stood guard at a checkpoint. It was the Azov battalion that arrested me. They beat me with rifle butts during the arrest. Then they questioned me using electro-shock devices and beating me right and left. After that I was taken to the Mariupol SBU where, with a plastic bag tied over my head and hands tied behind my back, I was thrown into the basement. I stayed that way for over 24 hours. Then they put another bag over my head and cut it so I could breathe and began the interrogation. I was thrown to the floor and 3 or 4 men kicked and beat with brass knuckles all over the body.

My friend was not beaten up; instead, his wife and my relatives – my mother, sister and niece – were taken hostage.'

Here is how Andrey Runov of the self-defense forces describes the torture inflicted on him and his friend who was paralyzed as a result of it. 'During the night 23–24 November I was arrested at my home by the Aidar battalion. We were taken to the airport of Mariupol. The beating and torture there were so severe that we kept blacking out. They would beat us on the heels, ribs and head. They said they were going to break our legs, threatened to cut off our ears and gouge our eyes out. My

friend got his insides beaten up and skull fractured; he was paralyzed as a result.'

Igor Pokrovsky from Ternopol, who was beaten up by the SBU right at the court house, says, 'I was arrested by SBU officers on 4 September 2014 in Ternopol. The hearing took place on the 8th, and the SBU beat me up right in the court house.'

Andrey Polonia is one of the victims. Here is what he says about the beatings and how he was hung from a hook at the SBU, 'We were arrested by SBU officers dressed as traffic police. They took us to the checkpoint and threatened us with guns saying "We'll shoot you and no one's going to do anything to us for that." They threatened us with electric shock torture, kicked us on the head. We were still at the checkpoint at that time. The handcuffs were always so tight that my hands turned blue. Then I was taken to the SBU where they continued with their beatings but this time they used plastic bottles filled with water; they handcuffed my hands behind my back and hung me from a hook. They took everything I had on me – all of my personal belongings, my phone, cash and credit cards – everything I had on me. Nothing was given back to me, even when we were to be released in the exchange.'

Here is an account by Alexandre Ryabchenko, a victim of Ukrainian law enforcement officers, '... I was crucified in a locker room on a sheet of wire mesh. They would come every hour and kick me. The next day I was taken to Debaltsevo. There they took me to the chief investigator who asked me if I would cooperate. I said there was nothing I could tell them, that I knew nothing. After that he called three assistants in and ordered them to beat everything they needed out of me. They tied my hands behind my back and suspended me on the door; my right foot was tied to the handle of another door by a rope, so I was standing only on my left foot. Two of them started to kick me on my left leg. Then I was taken to the hall, hands tied with scotch tape behind my back, and suspended by a rope tied to my hands and right foot. They put a black bag over my head and kept beating me until I blacked out.'

Sergey Chernysh, a member of the self-defense forces also says he was hung on a chain by his handcuffed hands, 'we were captured not far from

Lugansk and were taken to a helicopter landing site and then from there, on a helicopter, to another one. After that, we were put in a pit. My friend Alexander caught it harder: when he was taken in, they broke his nose, hit him repeatedly with a rifle butt on the head, fractured his skull and broke his lower jaw. Then we were loaded in a helicopter and this time taken to Kramatorsk.

There, in Kramatorsk, we were, of course, thrown again into pits, handcuffed; we were hung from the ceiling on chains and beaten. Then they took us to the town of Izium where we were handcuffed to a radiator with bags on our heads and strapped to a rack. My hands went numb; all this continued for three days. Then I was taken to the SBU, where they took off the handcuffs and the bag, cleaned and dressed the wounds on my hands. Then the exchange happened.'

A self-defense fighter P. Stepanenko, describes the torture he suffered at the airport of Mariupol, 'We sat in a pit and they threw bricks at us. Then they pulled us out and began beating us up with rifle butts. In the end we were kicked and hit with sticks.' Another self-defense fighter Alexander Marchenko describes the torture inflicted on him by Ukrainian soldiers from the 25th air mobile brigade the following way, 'They beat me on the head and all over the body with rifle butts. I got several ribs broken and knees beaten up.'

Another torture victim Arthur Nuzhnenko says, 'I was arrested on 16 October near my house. During the interrogation the investigator told me to get on my knees and take my shoes off. He then started hitting me on my heels, back and head with a stick. After a while he said a stick was not enough for me and went away to fetch an electro-shock device and started using that on me.'

Another victim Yuriy Novoseltsev says, 'After the "tumbler" beating I was locked up in a 1.5 m by 2.5 m room made of concrete and handcuffed to an anchor strap; someone put me in the chair and took the blindfold off me. Later, a man in a military uniform, not saying his name, began asking questions as to who I was and where I was from, how and why I had gotten where I had gotten. He pointed at the green chevron with embroidered dill on it on his left sleeve saying "I am proud

to be a Uke!" They took all the money I had on me, gold – both my rings, from the secular and the religious wedding ceremonies, and my chain and the cross. The man spoke quite politely, did not threaten or anything, just said that I was lying, turned around and walked out of the room. After a while, two Ukrainian soldiers wearing camouflage and yellow armbands came for me and started beating me. They kicked me and beat me with a stick freshly cut from a maple tree. They kicked me from my knees all the way up to my face, my hands, and only when I fell to the floor did they stop. Then they calmed down and left, after some time the officer came back saying that if I did not start talking, the same would be happening regularly and constantly.

During the night, almost every two hours, soldiers wearing balaclavas came to beat us, and did so professionally. They kept asking me if I was an FSB agent.'

Here is an account of a self-defense fighter Yuriy Slusar who was beaten with a saw chain and received threats of violence to his wife and daughters, 'On 4 November I was arrested by the Azov and SBU men when I was at work in the town of Druzhkovka. I was taken to Kramatorsk. They beat me on the head and feet with a saw chain, fired a gun close to my ear, threatened to shoot me in the head or to shoot my feet. They humiliated me and said they were going to rape me. They threatened to bring my wife and daughters in and torture them in front of me. I could not eat for three days. The only food I got was water and rusks.'

Valery Yakovenko of the self-defense forces was captured on 27 July 2014. He says, 'I was taken to the anti-terrorist operation quarters in Kramatorsk where I was beaten up. Four men would raise me off the concrete floor and throw me with force on it on my butt. I had a stroke and blacked out.

I came to when they threw water on me and heard the conversation my torturers were having; I saw their faces, too, because the bag I had on my head slid off my eyes. The man in charge of the interrogation was a chestnut-haired man about six feet tall, his alias was "Surgeon" and his name was Andrey (the black-bearded). He is probably from the Caucasus and probably has a medical degree. The other two answered to aliases "Viking" and "Igrek"

respectively. The latter is a Chechen, a major. He tried two or three times to cut my ears off with a bayonet knife but decided not to. Another one, also a Chechen spoke Chechen to Viking and was wearing a balaclava.

When in the anti-terrorist operation quarters I saw 17 “Tochka-U” launchers and 4 “Smerch” launchers. While being there the VSU launched six rounds of mortar fire at Gorlovka and Luhansk. On 19 September I was beaten by the head of the field security Oleg Doluchayev.’

Another victim Nikolay Khmaruk, was captured by the Donbass battalion on 28 September when he was at home. He says, ‘I was kidnapped from home by the punitive troops who took me to the Kramatorsk air field. There I was interrogated with the use of physical force: I was beaten on the head, ribs and feet. On 1 October I was taken to the SBU office in Kharkov. There I was beaten and spent the night after the questioning unconscious.’

Many of the torture victims report marathon beatings inflicted by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces.

Here is for example an account by German Mandrikov, ‘I am just a civilian, I had not participated in the military actions but the SBU investigators forced me to incriminate myself through torture.

In early October I went to see my mother and was arrested by unknown men. They took me to the airport of Mariupol where for three days in a row I suffered beastly torture. They used both psychological and physical abuse: they gave me electric shock, suffocated me with a plastic bag, beat on the feet with a tire iron, poured freezing water on me, etc. The torturers had an Azov insignia on their sleeves.

They threatened to rape my mother and bride. I could not bear the torment any longer and signed some documents without even reading them.’

A self-defense fighter Elvin Soidov says, ‘I was tortured for 24 days: they would poke me, hit me with a hammer, ropes and water hoses. On the 25th day I was taken to the SBU quarters in Mariupol and there the beating continued.’

Igor Miroshnichenko, who also suffered torture, was collecting information on human rights violations in Ukraine when the SBU captured

him: 'Some men from the Alpha unit broke into my house and arrested me. They took me to Slavyansk, to a college dorm. There they tortured and beat me for six days.'

Here is what Sergey Beliy, 56-year-old a self-defense fighter who suffered a three-day torture by the Ukrainian troops says: 'One of them hit me with a rubber baton on my lower back and I lost conscious. When I came to, they started asking questions about my comrades. I did not say anything, so they started beating me on the heels, which continued for the following three days.'

A self-defense fighter Sergey Kucherov says, that he went to Slavyansk to help his mother and brother to get to Russia. 'I was arrested at a cafe' in Slavyansk and was taken to an air field in Kramatorsk. For seven days in a row they beat me, threw hand grenades into the basement where they held me, took me to a firing squad, shot their guns saying that the next bullet would be mine. They beat me all over my body but mostly on the feet. I had to have my right foot stitched afterwards.'

Another self-defense fighter Andrey Rungov says, 'I was taken captive by the Aidar battalion. They took me to Mariupol, to the airport. The questioning began on the very first day but I could hardly understand what they wanted from me. I was beaten, including on the heels, strangled, had a bag put over my head. I thought they were going to suffocate me. They hit me on the head, beat all my insides off. My ribs still hurt. They threatened to cut my ears off, gouge my eyes out, and electrocuted me. They mostly beat me on the head but also on the body and on the ribs too. They used either bats or rifle butts. Rifle butts, I think, because it was very painful and hard. This continued for a week. I thought I wasn't going to get out of there.

They threatened to hurt my family too. My grandfather, 93-year-old, survived the war and he was threatened too. Yes, they threatened to hurt my family, to cut my daughter's ears off.'

The captured women are frequently raped. Here is what Yuriy Novoseltsev, one of the torture victims, says about Ukrainian soldiers from western Ukraine (he could tell that by their accent) beating up and raping a captured woman in the room next to the one where he was being held:

‘One night I heard a woman who was being beaten cry. Those young soldiers (aged from 18 to 25, hardly older) were speaking Ukrainian, but with the same accent they have in western Ukraine, meaning some of the words were Polish. Then, those youngsters (there were four or five of them, I gather) started insulting her; that is they were raping her, beating her and laughing like horses. That was not a laugh of a human being, meaning they were either high or drunk. They enjoyed beating and raping her very much. As to what exactly happened there, I learned later when that woman told me herself. Just the things I heard were insulting for me as a person.’

According to accounts by the victims, the Ukrainian army, the National Guard, various units of the Ministry of the Interior and the Security Service of Ukraine employ a whole range of torture techniques.

Many of the victims say that they were stabbed and cut with a knife.

Here is an account my Dmitry Klimenko, ‘I was captured on 8 July 2014 by the Donbass battalion when I was at home. I lost conscious during the arrest and came to only in the car. I had a bag on my head. They began beating me. They kicked me on the ribs, broke three of them. They kicked me on the head too. And I fainted once again.

I gained conscious only when they poured water on me. One the men took a knife and started stabbing me in the leg while continuing the questioning. Another one gave me electric shock. This inquisition continued for ten hours.

In the morning they decided to carry on with the interrogation. I was kicked on the body and on the ribs. It was then that I realized I had had my ribs broken. I fell with my face to the ground, heard the bolt of a rifle click and a burst shot into the ground. When they saw that I was not going to tell them anything, they put me in a car trunk and took somewhere. Then I found myself in an office. I instantly understood that it was the SBU. I spent two days there. Afterwards I was taken to a court and to an attorney. I had a chat with him and then came the investigating officer. I was brought into a court room. The judge took no notice of my wounds, though they were evident.’

Yuriy Simakov of the self-defense forces says, ‘I was arrested at my home by the SBU and police officers. They took me to the police station of

the town of Dzerzhinsk. There I was beaten and had my right leg cut with a knife. Then they transferred me to Kharkiv where I was thrown into prison. The inmates there had been instigated to torture men like me.'

Another victim Alexander Tkachenko describes how the Dnepr battalion fighters cut him with a knife and gave him electric shock, 'On 13 November I was arrested by the Dnepr-1 battalion and taken to a large building in a residential area, probably in the village of Mirniy. They tortured me with electroshock and beat me with iron tubes and rifle butts. They also kicked me and cut me with a knife. They threatened my family.'

Here is an account by Ivan Zalutniy of the self-defense forces who was electrocuted and had his body cut with a knife, 'The VSU soldiers detained me from 19 to 23 October. They used electroshock to torture me, hit me with a hand grenade on the head, tied me up and threatened me and cut me with a knife.'

Vladimir Arefiev of the self-defense forces describes the torture with a bayonet knife and a hammer drill the following way: 'I got shrapnel in my chest, tried to crawl out of the car but began to faint. It was in a hospital in Artyomovsk that I came to; there I learned that the city was being controlled by the National Guard. Three men wearing masks took me out of the hospital. When I refused to talk they started hitting me with a stick on the body, arms, and legs. The beating continued for three hours and then they twice came very close to shooting me.'

Later in the afternoon they beat me up again, this time with fists, kicked me and shot my foot with a non-lethal weapon. They threw me into a pit, handcuffed me and left like that for two days. Throughout the week they kept bringing me in for interrogation where they beat me taking a break only for lunch. They would hit me all over my body. They would put towel over my mouth and nose, throw my head backwards and pour water over my face. I was sitting on a chair with my feet and hands tied. They tried to drill my leg with a hammer drill. They also stabbed me in the arm with a bayonet knife.'

Igor Kozlov of the self-defense forces says, 'I was arrested on 18 July at a checkpoint not far from Popasnaya by the VSU. They beat me up, tortured me and tried to cut my ear off.'

Alexander Kashenko of the self-defense forces was captured by the “Dnepr” battalion on 13 November 2014 and describes in detail the torture inflicted on him by the Ukrainian security forces, ‘I had a bag on my head during the beating. They beat me with metal-plastic tubes. There were two, then three of them. They would hit me on the head, back, feet and kidneys. They tried to suffocate me with a fist stopping me from breathing, used an electro-shock device on me. They beat me with a rifle butt and kicked me with their army boots. I had ribs broken. The beatings with the use of a metal-plastic tube left six lesions on my skull.

They would hit me with a hammer, too. I got fingers, arms and a bone in my hand injured. I blacked out twice. The beatings continued for more than a day.

They began cutting me with a knife asking questions they wanted to be answered. They stabbed a knife into my leg, turned it and stuck it even deeper, turned it again and so on. Then they tried to cut off my fingers.’

Thus, a large number of victims assert that the torture techniques used include burning skin with the gas burners or burning-hot objects and burning various inscriptions into the skin of the prisoners.

Here is an account by Alexander Piksunov, member of the self-defense forces, of how the National Guardsmen burnt him with a burner and hung him by his arms:

‘We were ambushed and captured by the National Guard. For three days in a row they kept torturing us, they would beat us and burn us non-stop; they would suspend us from the ceiling. I was hooded and they burnt me with what I think was a gas burner.

They hung me by my arms; the scars have not healed yet and I cannot feel my right arm, it’s numb. My ribs still hurt. Those people, they would kick me, and tie my hands behind my back and strap a hand grenade safety pin to my finger. You move – you pull the pin. As a result, I had to sit still through the night so as not to pull it. I had to sit still but sometimes even wanted rip the pin out. Some asked to be shot, but those people would say that it was too easy of a death, though they repeatedly put us against the wall menacing with a gun, pulled the trigger but there was no shot, just the sound. Some of us asked them to shoot them, to stop

torturing them, but the answer was that it was too easy of a death for us, that we were no human, traitors of our country. They are not human at all; they are animals.'

Stanislav Stankevich, a member of the self-defense forces, describes the tortures inflicted on him by the National Guard – the word 'sepr' (short for 'separatist') was burnt into his chest with a red-hot chain and a Nazi swastika was burnt into his buttocks with a red-hot bayonet-knife:

'On 24 August 2014, we were taking someone to the border. On our way there our car was shot at. The driver and I were taken to Kramatorsk, where we were tortured, questioned, beaten by National Guardsmen. They burnt the word "sepr" (separatist) into my chest and a Nazi cross into my buttocks. After three days of beating, we were taken to the office of the Security Service in Kharkov. Only after spending 24 hours on the stone floor in a bathroom did we join the others in the mass cells. We had to pay for the treatment ourselves. I was released yesterday together with the others. The Security Service of Ukraine allocated 1,500 hryvnias for medicine so that all wounds could heal they would burn skin using a chain. They burnt a German cross into my thigh using a red-hot bayonet-knife. They beat me so hard they injured my eye; I cannot see with that eye now.'

Michael Lyubchenko, a member of the self-defense forces of the Donetsk People's Republic, who was taken prisoner not far from the town of Volnovakha, says, 'Later on, when I was transferred to the SBU, more people arrived. They showed the word "sepr" burnt into their bodies, swastika – into their buttocks and stars – into their backs. All of the burns were third-degree burns.'

Another victim, whose name is Roman Bannykh, says, 'I was arrested on 5 April 2014 when crossing the border. At the pre-trial detention centre in Kharkov, I met a man who had had his soles burnt with red-hot iron. I do not know where he is now. He was not in any of the buses which brought us to the location of the exchange.'

The methods of torture being used include crashing different parts of the victim's body. For example, Alexey Stenov, a member of the self-defense forces who was taken prisoner on 26 August 2014, describes how

the soldiers of the Ukrainian army hit him on his toes and knees with a hammer and a sledge:

‘When I was captured and they put me face down on the ground, the only thing I heard was, “Let’s take the big one. Get rid of the short one and the old one.” There were nine of us in the group. We were put in an APC and taken to an unknown locality; later it became clear that it was the 11th reconnaissance battalion.

It was there that they started hitting us on the toes with a sledge and on the knees and on the legs – with a hammer, they beat us with shovel handles...at night they tied us to some fence, stripped to underwear, and poured cold water on us throughout the night. In the morning the beating continued, and at lunchtime we were taken to some headquarters where there was more beating. Later at the SBU office in Izium the treatment somewhat improved. We would have one or two meals a day, sometimes they could forget about us at all. Then the exchange happened.’

Here is an account by Oleg Fuhrman, also a member of the self-defense forces, of the brutal torture that he suffered and of how Ukrainian soldiers crashed his friend’s toes with a sledge:

‘We were arrested at a checkpoint. At first, there was no beating, but then some people from a punitive battalion came, and that is when the beating began. They split my lip, jumped on my chest and back, beat me with rifle butts and with barrels of their rifles on my spine. The three of us were tied up, hooded, and put into an APC; the other five people were executed at the checkpoint. They brought me to some headquarters and the beating continued, they poured water on me. In the evening I was put in some barn and later another man joined me. The third guy was being tortured outside. They crashed his toes with a sledge and were pouring cold water on him throughout the night. In the morning they put us in a car. They got us hooded and tied our eyes with scotch tape. We were brought to some place where the beating continued, meaning they were beating several people at a time. They used a rubber hose for beating. Then we were put into a car yet again and brought to their headquarters in Kramatorsk where they continued with the beating. They executed the beating in groups of three to four people, used electro-shock devices, made us kneel with bags on our heads, and fired their

guns near the ear. Then their commanding officer came, took us and put on a chain in a pit, handcuffed. I could not stand on my feet, nor could I lie down, so I was hanging on that chain because my ribs and fingers were broken.'

Another victim Oleg Stetasov, describes how the SBU threatened to cut off his fingers and crush his feet with a hammer, 'I was arrested in Kharkov in late November. I was taken to the SBU quarters. During the interrogation they beat me on the kidneys trying to force me to testify. I spent one day there, and then they took me to the airport of Mariupol where they used an electro-shock device on me and hit me on my arms and legs with a police baton. They threatened to bring in my mother, younger brother and elder sister in and kill them in front of me if I refused to make a statement the way they wanted me to. Trying to force me to testify they threatened to cut off my fingers and crash my feet with a hammer.'

The torture victims indicate that the Ukrainian army and law enforcement bodies systematically employ a torture technique called 'waterboarding'. Previously, this method was used by the American secret services.

V. Popov of the self-defense forces describes the torture by waterboarding this way: 'I was captured by the Shakhtersk battalion and taken to the transit police station. I was tortured there. They put me on my back and poured water into my mouth. I felt as if I was drowning. Then they brought me to my senses. They threatened to shoot me.'

Another of the torture victims Sergey Skidan, describes the torture by the SBU officers who waterboarded him and used an electro-shock device on him: 'I was arrested by the SBU on September 11 2014. They brought me in and started beating me; they also waterboarded and cross-questioned me and gave me electric shock. At a certain moment I blacked out and came to in another cell. After a while, they followed the same procedure and threw me into a cell again. Then a man came to me and asked me what I wanted to say to my family; he forced me to stand on my knees and pressed a gun against me between the shoulder blades. I heard a click and then he said that the next time would be different.'

Here is what one of the victims named Vlad, 18-year-old says, 'I came home from Donetsk. In the afternoon a girl I know called me and suggested

meeting up. There were three other friends with me. As we were getting out of the taxi a minibus drove up to us and we were arrested. I was hooded and dragged somewhere. They began the questioning straightaway. They put me on my back with a cloth on my face and started pouring water. My hands were handcuffed behind my back and I was lying on my back. I blacked out and they brought me to. It happened three times. And each time they brought me to. Then they recorded me testifying. They took me to an investigator and drew up a protocol saying I had been driving around Donetsk in an ambulance car looking for the wounded.'

Denis Gavrilin, another victim of torture who was captured by the Ukrainian National Guard on 31 July 2014 and handed over to the Azov battalion, describes the same torture technique: 'I was blindfolded; they put a cloth on my face and poured water. I could not see anything. And my hands were handcuffed behind my back. They were holding my head from behind and pouring water over the cloth that was covering my face. I do not know whether they were pouring water from a teapot or a bottle... I felt as if I was drowning. Then they brought me to... and then did the same thing.'

The victims indicate that the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces use other torture techniques as well, for example suffocation with plastic bags, gas masks, etc.

Here is an account by Andrey Sheremet of the self-defense forces who was suffocated with a plastic bag put over his head, tortured with a soldering tool and electrocuted: 'After the arrest I was taken to the police station where they tortured me. It's called a "swallow" (the bird) when they put a bag on your head. After what seemed like five days the National Guard came for me. They were wearing masks. They put a bag on my head and took me outside the town to some house where the real torture began: they gave me electric shock, tortured me with a soldering tool, put a bag on my head and suffocated me. Then they took me outside, put a machine gun to my head and pulled the trigger.'

Gennady Anisimov, a member of the self-defense forces, says the SBU was drowning and strangling him and threatened to kill his entire family. 'I was captured by the SBU operatives on October 20, 2014 in the village of Konstantinovka. They took me somewhere, I do not know where. There,

they led me into a container of sorts and started kicking me and hitting me with bare hands and sticks. They shoved me into a fire, drowned and strangled me, and brought me out saying they were going to shoot me. The SBU people beat me up every hour for ten days, and then took me to the SBU quarters in Mariupol and put me in the basement there. The beatings became less frequent, and they tried to convince me to sign various papers that said things about me that I had not done. They promised to kill my family, so I signed some of those papers.'

Vladimir Ladtsev from Odessa testifies that Islamov, an SBU investigator, also tried to suffocate him with a plastic bag and threatened to subject his wife to torture. 'I was detained by the SBU on 24 October at 6.30 a.m. They cuffed my hands behind my back and beat me until 2:00 p.m. SBU investigator Islamov was among those who were beating me. Aside from the beatings, they tortured me with electric shocks and suffocated me by putting a plastic bag over my head. There were threats about torturing my wife too.'

Leonty Lazarev talks about being tortured by means of a gas mask with air intake shut off. 'On 4 November armed soldiers of the 71st airborne brigade force-entered my house. They hit my wife and pushed me down on my belly. Three people jumped onto me and started jumping on my body and trampling all over it. Then, not having found anything in my house, the soldiers put a bag on my head, tied my hands, and brought me outside the village. They were kicking me. Some time passed, and finally an SBU car came and took me to a location unknown to me. One of the men in the car told me to address him as Yesaul¹. In a while, we stopped; they led me out of the car and fired over my head. Then, they hit me on the head with something heavy, and I passed out. When I came to again they were dragging me out of the car. They sat me on a bench, and Yesaul, not saying a word, started beating me with a metal rod.

He was putting a gas mask on me, over and over, until I began to suffocate. I had to sign their protocols even though I had no chance to read them. They were grounds for the criminal case against me and for my imprisonment in the Mariupol pre-trial detention facility.'

¹ A cossack captain

Radik Udovichenko, a member of the self-defense forces, says that he was being strangled with a rope and pushed into water with his hands tied. 'I was arrested at the Slavyansk checkpoint on 8 October 2014; the reason was that I did not have any documents on me. After they detained me they took me to a room and started beating me, strangling me with a rope, and pushing me in the water with my hands tied; they shot their guns and threatened to send me to the Right Sector where I would be tortured, or kill me. They kept trying to make me sign papers that said that I killed Ukrainian servicemen and fired at infantry combat vehicles and armoured vehicles. On 12 October I was transferred to Poltava and placed in the basement at the SBU quarters. Oksana Savchenko was the investigator. They beat me regularly, two times a day.'

Pavel Zeyfert describes the torture he was subjected to: the SBU officers would not let him breathe. 'I was arrested by the SBU people. They hit me on my hands with a bat, then put a bag over my head not letting me breathe. They also put a gas mask on me, and again, I could not breathe.'

The so-called 'Banderist garrotte' is used as a weapon – both for intimidation and torture.

A nurse named Olga, who was captured on 15 October 2014, says, 'During the questioning at the SBU, one of them showed me an iron wire in the form of a spiral. He asked me, "You know what it's called? It's called a 'Banderist garrotte'. I will be strangling you with it until you start talking.'"

Yevgeniy Pavljuk, a self-defense fighter captured on 10 September 2014 by the SBU, says, 'At the SBU, they put a garrotte round my throat, kicked me and beat me on the head and in the kidneys with a rifle butt, hooded me, poured water on me. And later on, at a pre-trial investigation facility beat me on the head with the Criminal Code of Ukraine.'

Electric shock is a common torture tool used by the Ukrainian armed forces and divisions of the Ministry of the Interior.

For example, Anton Lazurenko says, 'I was not in the self-defense forces, I had no relations with them and did not give them any assistance. On 29 October 2014, at 8:00 p.m., the SBU captured me right in front of the building where I live and took me to the anti-terrorist operation quarters in Kramatorsk. They used violence to make me sign documents about my

involvement with the DPR self-defense forces. They used a wooden bat and an electric generator, and they were hitting and kicking me as well. I asked them just shoot me, but they said that if I did not sign their fake stories about my participation in the DPR self-defense forces, they would go and take it out on my pregnant girlfriend. So I had to back down and sign their stories. Later, they were treated as my own testimony.'

Valery Karlov, a member of the self-defense forces, was captured on 6 November. He says, 'They took me somewhere, I could not see exactly where, I had a bag on my head. Then everybody left, but returned in about ten minutes. They started beating me with something hard. At some point, my sight went black, and that was the end of it; when I came to I was in a sitting position again, and the interrogation started. I passed out and fell down several times. The next day, they came again and started over, but this time they also had an electric shocker. They used it on my back and legs, and that day I lost consciousness and fell repeatedly too.'

Yevgeny Gomzyak, a member of the self-defense forces, says, 'I was detained in my own flat by soldiers of the Ukrainian armed forces. During the arrest, they put a bag over my head and sat me in a car. We drove for two hours. All this time, they were hitting me on my ribs, legs, and head. I was handcuffed.

Then, they led me to some basement and started torturing me with a shocker. After that, they connected up some wires and were again giving me electric shocks. Then, I was thrown into a room 1.5 by 2 meters large and held there for three days. My torturer had a Caucasus accent. I also heard a code name "Hans". They threatened to sell my body for organs. They also said they would bring in my son, too. So I signed the accusations. It was only after that that they handed me over to the SBU.'

Anatoly Andreev says, 'I was detained by the Ukrainian armed forces on a public bus near the village of Nikolaevka. In the cell, they regularly beat me. Twice, they took me out for mock-shootings. They used electric shockers, and often I would fall to the ground from those shocks. All of this they captured on a portable video camera.'

For instance, Igor Ljamin, one of the victims of torture who was captured on 14 September 2014, says, 'Last time, they made me hang by the

bar for twenty minutes, then took me down, started pouring water on me and gave me electric shock with an electroshock weapon.’

Stanislav Shchedrovsky, another victim captured by the Azov battalion, also describes this method of torture: ‘during the beating, my ribs were broken, rib cage displaced and lungs damaged. Then they brought me to the court where I signed, under threats, some documents. I did not even have a chance to read them trough. Those people kept beating and threatening me. They put a damp cloth on my skin and applied electric shock. It happened often. My rib cage was crashed. Later, I had a lung surgery. They beat me on the head and hands. My head swelled up, I could not move my arm, and almost all my ribs were broken and liver displaced.’

Roman Sinko, a member of the self-defense forces, was arrested on 14 August. He says, ‘The background picture on my phone was DPR-related, and for that they took me off the bus. They led me out and made me jump into a trench to wait for the investigation. While I was there I was approached by one serviceman after another, and they all beat me. Then they brought me to Volnovakha, threw me into a cell there and began to beat me trying to make me tell them things. The next morning, they led me to an empty room and again started beating me. They used electroshock and hanged me up.

The next day, I was questioned by an investigator. They led me to another cell, took the bag and the handcuffs off, put some papers in front of me, and told me to sign them saying that otherwise I would not leave that place alive. They did not let me read them. Then they put the bag on my head again, handcuffed me, and said we were going to the court and if I were to mention being tortured I would die as soon as the hearing was over. At the hearing in Mariupol, I realised I had been in the Volnovakha SBU.’

Alexander Svoeolin, a member of the self-defense forces, describes the electroshock torture he was put through: ‘They forced their entry into the house, tied my hands together with a plastic tape and put me into a minivan. The route took about two hours. Then they got me out of the car and I heard someone being led right beside me and very aggressive remarks towards that someone. I heard cries and threats, and then a gunshot and the

sound of a human body falling to the ground. Someone said, “Why did you dig out such a small hole?”

I was led into a basement where they had me sit on the stairs with one of my hands handcuffed to a pipe behind my back. After a quarter of an hour, I heard them leading out a man. And again, they were yelling at him, threatening him and I heard gunshots and the same sound of a body falling down.

They would come from time to time and kick me and beat me on the head and other parts of the body. They poured water over me, tied one of my hands to my knees, took off my shoes and attached one electrode to my hand and the other one to my foot. All this time, from about 12 p.m. – I do not remember exactly – until the evening of the following day, until 5 or 6 p.m., I was being questioned and tortured. They attached wires from a battery to my hand, poured water and switched on the current. I blacked out several times and just as I came to, they would pour water and after some time continued the questioning.

I also remember I was brought in for questioning when someone put a hand grenade into my palm and pressed it against my hand. I think it was done so that the grenade had my fingerprints on it; then they took off the cap I had on and began the questioning. During the torture, they said they had some sort of a terrarium where they threw people and there was nothing left of them afterwards.’

Yegor Kharitonov talks about being tortured in the Azov battalion by means of electric shock and gives an example of the Ukrainian side refusing to hand a friend of his over for prisoner exchange in order to suppress the evidence of torture. ‘I was taken to the Mariupol airport and beaten by 3 or 4 people from the Azov battalion. They hit me on the head with a butt of an assault rifle and also on my nose and hands; they kicked me in the groin. They would lower me down into a hole 3-4 meters deep and throw slag blocks and stones in there. Those would land on my head, back, arms, and legs. They fired shots over my head, connected wires to my feet and ran electric current through them. They burned me with their cigarettes and just tormented me. Then I was taken to the Mariupol SBU where the beatings continued. When the exchange happened my friend was left in the hospital

because at the medical examination before the exchange it was discovered he had a puncture in his lung under one of the ribs due to the torture.'

Andrey Lyskov, a member of the self-defense forces, says that members of the Patriots of Ukraine organisation tortured him with electric shocks. 'I was beaten in the Kramatorsk airport. There were three of them, they introduced themselves as the "third force" and said they were Patriots of Ukraine. I could not see what they hit me with because my eyes were covered. They also tortured me with electric shocks.'

Igor Karpov, a member of the self-defense forces, says, 'I was captured on 6 November by people unknown to me in my own house with my wife present. They took me to a basement somewhere. During the interrogation, they were beating me so I would pass out. They hit me with something hard on my back, legs, and head. I lost consciousness several times that day. The last time I came to I was already lying on some sort of crate handcuffed to the water pipe valve. The next day, the questioning continued, but now electric shocks were added to the beatings.'

Yuriy Novoseltsev, also a victim of this torture technique, says, 'On 10 September 2014, I was arrested and taken to the airport of Kramatorsk. I was handcuffed to a chain one meter long. After 15 to 20 minutes two men approached me making almost no sound and began the "tumbler" beating, that is started beating me with the flat side of a rifle butt – one of the men hit me on right side of the head, then on the left side, pushing me forward, then the other one hit me on the forehead, which made me lean back, after which I got kicked in the abdomen. I blacked out and fell. I don't know how long I lay there unconscious. Someone came up to me and explained that it had been a 'tumbler' beating. They made me sit on a stool some five meters away and handcuffed me to another chain. I was sitting when (I don't know how much time had passed) again two men approached me and did the same thing. I blacked out once again, fell to the floor and wet myself. They kicked me in the stomach very, very hard somewhere close to the liver, the beating was professional.'

Here is how Igor Lyamin, another victim of torture, who was arrested on 14 September by the 'Dnepr' battalion, describes another torture

technique called a 'swing': '...so they take a hex bar. They force your feet between your hands, in handcuffs, and pull the bar over. Then they would rotate me by the bar and leave me hanging like that. I thought my bones would fall out. My hands still won't listen to me, here and here.'

A large number of the people interviewed said that the Ukrainian troops were sending some of the prisoners to minefields. For example, Vasily Kharitonov, a member of the DPR self-defense forces who was captured not far from the village of Petrovskoye on 18 August, says, '... then they dragged me to a pit. Two men were sent to the minefield. I heard seven explosions. They were going to execute me by shooting.' Konstantin Afonchenko, a torture victim who was also captured on 18 August, says, '...then I was sent to Kramatorsk. There I was put into a pit, occasionally beaten and insulted. Then new prisoners arrived and all attention was focused on them. A paratrooper came up to one of them and took him and another guy somewhere. Later I found out that they were sent to a minefield.'

Alla, the President of a humanitarian foundation, says, 'At the Kramatorsk airport, boys young enough to be my sons yelled insults "we will rape you and send you to a minefield".'

Almost everyone says that the Ukrainian army and punishment battalions kneecap and run over feet with military vehicles. A mock firing squad is also a common practice.

Sergey Mosin who had been involved in preparations for the referendum describes the torture he was subjected to because of these activities. 'I participated in the rallies and the referendum preparations. I was arrested on 9 November 2014 in the village of Yenakievo. For one day, they held me in the territory of the Bulavinskaya mine where they questioned me, and beat and tortured me. They hit me with gun butts on my back, hands, and ribs. I was hit and kicked on my head and body. Twice, they led me out for mock-shootings. They threatened to kill my mother, to tear her in pieces running over her with an armored vehicle.'

Michael Lyubchenko from the self-defense forces says, 'I was arrested during an operation. Two of my comrades were killed, other two escaped and I was among the captured. They tied our hands and put into a car. We

arrived to a place unknown to me. At first, we had to sit in a pit but then we were brought in for questioning. I could not feel my hands.

I saw a guy standing waist-deep in a hole in the ground and being buried with a shovel bucket and then the truck run over him. Two members of the self-defense forces were sent to a minefield but one of them said, “No, I’d prefer you shot me dead right here.” Then they started shooting his toes first, then going up all the way to the groin, every new bullet hole about five centimetres from the previous one. When the shooter was done with one leg, he proceeded to the other one. He was shooting an assault rifle.’

Dmitry Martuyukhin, a member of the self-defense forces, says that he was tortured in the Azov battalion. ‘I was detained by the National Guard. On the way to Debaltsevo, they were hitting me over the head with a pistol handle. Once we stopped at the roadside, and they dragged me out of the car ready to shoot me. The man in charge told them not to because the command already knew about us so we had to be brought there alive. The Azov battalion was stationed in Debaltsevo. They were beating us for half of the night, and then started firing at my friend. They gave him three wounds, and he was sent to a hospital.’

Denis Gavrilin, another victim who was arrested by the Ukrainian National Guard on 31 July 2014 and given over to the Azov battalion, says, ‘They threw people into a pit full of dead bodies. Bodies of the people they had executed by shooting. Then they threw us into that pit; it had a specific smell. I felt as if I had been executed too.’

Vladimir Bystritskii, a fighter from the self-defense forces of the Donetsk People’s Republic who also suffered acts of torture, describes the threats made to his family and a mock running over with an APC, ‘I was taken prisoner on 5 July 2014. On our way somewhere in the car I was being beaten. When we arrived, they threw me into a pit. During the questioning, my hands were tied, I was being beaten; they wanted to shoot me in the knee. Then they put me on the ground under an APC and acted as if they wanted to run me over – in order to scare me. Then they dragged me from under the vehicle and beat until I lost conscious. They then threw me into a waste pit and started shooting right next to me, then dragged me out and continued with the questioning. I kept blacking out throughout the

questioning. We had to spend the night in a pit, in the rain. The next day, we were loaded into a car and taken to the SBU. There, they continued beating us and threatened our families with death. After that, we were taken to a pre-trial investigation facility where we underwent a medical examination; then they left us alone.'

Sergey Dekanenko, another torture victim, says, 'On 29 September I was arrested by servicemen from the Donbass battalion. I was hit on the head with a gun butt. My family was there during the arrest, and they were all very scared. The servicemen threatened them a lot and took away my children's phones. I was brought to the Kramatorsk airport where they started hitting me on the head with a hand grenade, threatened me and my family, and fired a gun next to my left ear. After the torture in the basement, they made me do a video, they threatened to slaughter all of my family. They also threatened to do things to my brother whom they detained the very same day. After three days of torture, we were taken to the Kharkov SBU and held there until the exchange.'

A member of the self-defense forces named Anatoly Kuzmin describes how drunk Ukrainian soldiers shot dead one of the female prisoners: 'In early September a guy I know asked me to meet with him. He said someone wanted to meet me and ask me to join the self-defense forces. I met with him. We sat for a while; he bought me beer and said, "I need to move my car a little closer." As soon as he left, six soldiers with assault rifles came out, accompanied by a policeman. At the municipal police station, they began talking to me in a very rude way.

I was taken somewhere and was locked up in a refrigerator. They beat me, kicked me in the ribs both from the left and from the right. They smothered me with a plastic bag, strangled me with handcuffs and suspended from the ceiling. When I got my jaw displaced, I could hardly chew.

After that, I was supposedly transferred to Izium. We were kept in a basement of what seemed to be a boiler station. They would get drunk, come to us and playfully fire blank cartridges and shoot at the ceiling. Then people from Right Sector came, drunk as well. Among the prisoners, there was a girl name Katya, from Kramatorsk. They shot her dead when they got drunk.

Then three men came in; one of them with a Kalashnikov in his hands and another one with a Makarov pistol loaded with live ammunition. They went from one prison cell to another shooting, then came to her (as far as we could tell), shot at the ceiling and then after another shot we heard a hoarse sound she made; one of the cellmates said her last word was “Why?” And that was it. There was then a lot of noise and shouting. The next day they acted as if nothing had happened.’

The vast majority of people detained by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces receive threats of murder, torture, and harm to their families during interrogations.

For example, Zinaida Maleyeva captured on 6 October 2014 says, ‘I was taken away wearing just a light gown, socks, and slippers. Then they led out my husband who has A1 category disabilities and can barely walk with a stick. We were brought to a factory, but my husband was put in another building. I was placed in a room 1 by 1.5 meters large and two meters high; there was a small door and a fan, and it was very cold there. I did not tell them anything because I did not know anything. They shouted at me, insulted, threatened and hit me, gave me electric shocks, stood on my feet driving their heels in, kicked me on the legs with toecaps of their shoes while holding a gun to the back of my head with the safety off. They shone torchlight into my eyes. They said I would me raped by lots of soldiers, and then they would bring in my daughter and granddaughters of 6 and 1, and rape them, too. I did not know what they were doing to my husband, but I feared for him and also for my mother who is 80.’

Andrey Dekanenko was captured on 29 September 2014 in his house. He says, ‘I was arrested by masked people who had jumped out of a minibus passing by. They pushed me onto the ground and started kicking me. Then, they took me to some basement and began to beat me asking where the weapons were. I said I did not know.

Then one of the masked men started dictating words that I was supposed to say on video. The words were, “I am a member of the reconnaissance and sabotage group that was gathering information and transferring it over the phone”. I said that it was not true and that I was not

going to repeat it. But they threatened to bring my wife in and begin slowly killing her right in front of me. So I had to say all of it for the camera.'

Oksana Griban who called a DPR hotline had been detained on 6 November 2014. She says, 'I was taken to Volnovakha. There they told me that if I did not answer their questions they would take my husband and son and give them over to the Right Sector.'

Ruslan Ilchuk, a member of the self-defense forces, was captured on 24 November 2014 by the SBU operatives. He says, 'After the beating, they told me they would bring in my wife and rape her in front of me. When they said that I agreed to sign the papers.'

Stanislav Suslov describes being tortured and threatened with slaughter of his family so he would make a false statement on having been recruited by the FSB. 'During arrest, they beat me, twisted my feet, put a bag on my head, and suffocated me. In the SBU quarters, the beatings went on: I was hit on my head, legs and body. The beatings continued for three days. They threatened to kill my family and my relatives, so I agreed to read the text they gave me on camera saying that I had allegedly been recruited by the FSB.'

Alexander Petrov says, 'I was captured on 19 November 2014. They were hitting me on my arms and legs with a bat. Then they brought an electric shocker and the torture began. They made me sign their papers threatening to capture my wife too.'

Vladimir Dyubov, an Odessa resident, says, 'On 21 July I was detained by the SBU people in my flat in Odessa. They threatened to give the address of my wife and children to the Right Sector.'

Here is an account by Konstantin Simenov, a member of the self-defense forces who was tortured and beaten in a 'press-cell', of the threats made by the SBU officers to 'cut his wife's and children's heads off':

'On 26 May 2014, I went to Kharkov on family business. Four men knocked me down and gave me a ten-minute beating with fists and feet. They broke my rib and put guns to my head saying they would kill me.

They took me in some place where there were people in uniform. They had listening devices but kept beating me to make me confess to working for the Russian Main Intelligence Directorate. So they beat me,

broke my left eardrum; I could not get up from the bed for four days. The beatings were rough. I spent about a month there. They said they would cut my wife's and children's heads off. They would say, "If you do not confess to anything, we will cut your wife's and her little bastards' heads off. If we don't do it, Right Sector will. We are partners." They mentioned Andrey Beletsky who is now the leader of the Azov battalion. I was afraid for my family, so I signed the documents. However, later I was put through a "cell press" and "was given the finishing touch" at the investigation cell.'

Sergey Korneyev was arrested on 22 September. He says, 'They smashed down the door in the flat where I was living with my wife and our underage daughter. Masked men carrying assault rifles stormed inside and started beating me with those rifles right in front of my family. Later, I found out that they were Alfa operatives from Dnepropetrovsk. The SBU men from the Dnepropetrovsk and Kharkov regions were also there. I was taken to Dnepropetrovsk. On the way, we stopped several times so they could continue beating me and demanding I took the blame for everything. They said that otherwise they would kill my family.'

One of the victims named Pavel Kartsev: 'I was captured on 9 July and beaten. My girlfriend was taken, too, and brought to the military base. They forced her to attest to my being the commander of a unit that was taking down helicopters. They told me that she would not leave the base, that they would rape her in front of me and kill in the end. They gave me blank sheets of paper to sign and forced me to confess to being the commander of that unit, and then let her go.'

Konstantin Morev, a member of the self-defense forces, was detained by the SBU on 16 November. He says, 'From the moment of the arrest, I was beaten on various parts of my body: my head and arms; I was kicked in the stomach area. They put a cap on my head. Whenever I tried to take it off they would hit me in my face and eyes. They put me in a Gazel car between the seats, and continued hitting me on the back of my head and on my spine. They twisted my arms and used chokeholds that threatened to break my neck bone. Then I passed out. They brought me round and went on hitting me on my back and head.'

When we arrived at the Kharkov SBU they took me out of the car, placed me with my face to the wall, made me put my forehead against that wall, set my feet wide apart, and started hitting me on the insides of my legs. When I was taken to an office and sat on a chair they went on hitting my legs with something hard. I could not tell how long it lasted. The second investigator who had been introduced as a psychologist was telling me that if I did not confess they could take me to the woods and kill me because I was there unofficially.

These threats did not work, so they began threatening my family, and I gave them the testimony they wanted.'

Alexander Shalunov was captured by the SBU on 21 July 2014. He says, 'I have nothing to do with the self-defense forces. During the arrest, they were very rough with my wife and 13-year-old daughter, they made them lie on the floor and had assault rifles pointed at them. At the SBU quarters, I was accused under Article 258 part 2 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code. Investigator Ismailov said that though I was there, my wife and daughter were still free, so he would take them and give them to the Right Sector. He said he would give my daughter to the Right Sector where she would be torn to pieces, so I made the testimony.'

In some cases, threats against relatives are actually carried through. Igor Lyamin, another victim detained by the Dnepr battalion on 14 September, says, 'It turns out my wife was tortured. They took her too, and held her in the cell next to mine. They broke all of the toes on her left foot. And I signed all the papers.'

Vladimir Demchenko, yet another victim, tells that, aside from threats to his relatives, he was placed in a cell together with actual criminals:

'I was detained on 29 June 2014 at a GAI checkpoint on the Kiev-Kharkov highway. When I entered the checkpoint, I was taken by the SBU. We went out to the car; it was open, and inside were two TNT blocks and a map with some marks on it. Neither the map, nor the blocks were mine.

In the SBU quarters they beat me, and violently, and emotionally abused me. They threatened that they will make their daughters prostitutes.

In detention, I was placed in the same cell with veritable criminals, with murderers and drug addicts. For the first time in my life, I saw people

shoot drugs, it was a real shock. Then I was transferred to another cell, and the criminals were even worse there.'

Those detained by the Ukrainian side suffer torture at various stages: directly when taken prisoner, during transportation, after being handed over to this or that unit, under preliminary or principal interrogations, in detention facilities, in courts, etc.

When asked to define the entity carrying out the torture, victims name the National Guard, various groups under the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs, Right Sector, various units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU).

For example, Alexander Zolotukhin, a self-defense fighter, says, 'I was taken prisoner. My friend and I were held in a cellar. They demanded we answer their question – how much we sold Ukraine for. I tried to explain that this is my land, I was born here and grew up here, and I didn't sell anything to anybody. Those who guarded us there in the cellar, young men of 25-28 years old, kicked us in the liver, the kidneys; and when one of them got tired, the other took his place. The first one went under the code name Tyoma, the second was Veter, and that one liked to jab an awl into my left shoulder blade. All this was happening in the cellar of the building near the checkpoint. I knew I couldn't stand it anymore, and I attempted to smash down the door, but they said if I tried that they would hang a grenade on it. First, they shot me in the leg, then there were other shots, but those only winged me.

Then they actually took us to the city, to the hospital. No case was opened against us, but there were talks about prisoner exchange. People came from a different battalion and wanted to take us to exchange, but the first ones wouldn't let us go. I don't want to get into detail – this is too hard for me.'

Sergey talks about how he was severely beaten on the way to the SBU quarters (those were SBU officers who later tortured him and his wife). 'We were captured at home. SBU people came wearing masks, hammered down the door, and began beating me right in front of my wife and 10-year-old daughter. My wife started having a heart attack. They searched the flat, planted two grenades there, then put me in a minibus and continued

beating me on the way. The papers they had said some nonsense, that I was an agent of the Russian Security Service. They told me that if I didn't sign them, they would kill my wife. When in the SBU quarters, I signed everything. They'd broken three of my ribs while beating me on the bus. I found this out at fluorography. My X-ray images were replaced so that there would be no problems in the temporary detention centre.'

Another victim says, 'I was in the self-defense forces. They captured me, stabbed me with a knife, and beat me with pieces of metal, on my spine, my legs, too. They demanded I confess to being a terrorist, and so on. They used an electric shocker on me. Then they tied a wire to my legs and started twisting this knob. The shocks were severe. What's really outstanding is that one beating was right in the court hall, in front of the judge. He saw everything. They said if I don't put my signature on the papers, they will bring my children, my family in.'

Artyom, taken on 13 June in Mariupol, testifies, 'They started beating us right away, brought us to the airport, and placed us in the cold storage. They tormented us. All wore masks. We were held there for three days, and then taken to the SBU quarters. We had broken ribs, and no medical aid was given. They abused us physically, put weapons in our hands, so that we would leave fingerprints, and threatened us.'

Some of the victims questioned say that SBU officers prefer to use servicemen from other Ukrainian military units to torture prisoners, but are still present at the torture sessions.

For instance, Alexander Piskunov, captured on 4 August 2014, talks about being strangled, tortured by means of electric current, and forced to shoot himself – all in the presence of SBU officers. 'In the evening, they would beat and question me. All of the interrogations were the same. One of the sessions lasted ten hours, and in that time, I was not given a drop of water, the shocker battery ran out, and they beat me. Then they changed their tactic and began to strangle me. This went on for five days. SBU people were present at interrogations. They constantly tried to provoke me. They said they'd execute me, but fired above my head and sent me to the cell. Then they gave me a gun to shoot myself, and beat me until I pulled the trigger, but it turned out there were no bullets.'

Some of the victims say that they were subjected to excruciating torture right after being wounded or directly in hospitals. Practically everybody attests that medical help is either unavailable or insufficient.

For example, Dmitry Wulko was under fire at a checkpoint. He was admitted to the hospital with multiple gunshot wounds. He talks about how servicemen of the Ukrainian National Guard tortured him and other patients in the very same hospital right after surgery:

I was taken prisoner in September 2014. At the checkpoint, the National Guard had my car under fire. I had bullet wounds in my hip, lower back, and chest. I was taken to the hospital, went through surgery, and was then placed in the ward for prisoners of war, and handcuffed. Bandages were changed only once a week. Two of the wounds festered.

For three weeks, drunken soldiers of the National Guard came to the ward to ask, "How much did you sell Ukraine for?" Then they would land blows over the whole of my body. We lay there handcuffed to our beds, and they would come and beat us up, they were drunk and carried machine guns. One would approach and strike you in the face, and another into the wound. They would torment us like that, then leave, drink more, and return to start again. This went on for days; they would not let us sleep. They pushed gun-butts into our wounds and threatened to cut our tendons with knives. They shouted at the medics to not give us painkillers. They said I wouldn't last long.

They poked their knives in the arm of another self-defense fighter, Alexander, just moved his bandages aside and picked at it. There was one other who would drive an awl into people's backs.

A man who was in the ward next to ours told us that he had just been driving his car. It had been malfunctioning, and he'd stopped to see what was wrong, and a National Guard vehicle pulled over. They captured him, took him to some building, to the cellar. For two days they tortured and tormented him.

Before the prisoner exchange they gave us injections, and for two days already I have not wanted to sleep. I don't know what they gave us, they didn't explain anything.'

Another victim says, ‘They held us in the cold storage of the Mariupol airport. They would come in, put a gun to your head, then fire a shot somewhere next to you. There were some guys – they made them lie on the floor and fired near their heads. Others yet were cut – one guy had tendons in his leg cut, and another was gun-butted into the head, his scalp almost came off. They said, you are nobodies. They would not give us food or water, would not let us go to the bathroom. They forced us to make confessions about being terrorists. No medical help was given. The only thing they would give us was Analgin, no matter what the problem.’

Alexander Kovalev, a self-defense fighter, says that those kept in the SBU were not provided with adequate medical assistance either.

‘In the beginning of August 2014 we were driving in a car and got ambushed. A had a lot of injuries to my internal organs, and two ribs broken; one of the ribs punctured my lung, and blood flowed into it. They beat me violently, tied my hands with a rope, grinded me against the asphalt, I almost lost a hand. Then I was taken to the SBU quarters, and only after that to the hospital. They held me in the SBU for a month. There were people with shrapnel and bullet wounds; many of them are not taken to the hospital at all.’

Vladimir Olshansky talks about what he saw in the SBU quarters. ‘In March 2014 I was taken to the Kharkov division of the SBU. People had been beaten up there; they lay with broken ribs and dislocated jaws. One got sick; he had a fever and was vomiting. Guards were called in, and they took him away. In the morning we asked where he was, but no one told us anything. I suspect he died. This is simply horrible. Everyone comes with injuries from there.’

Ivan Lysenko, an anti-Maidan activist, says, ‘One day in late May 2014 I was going to Kharkov. At one of the stops a girl entered with a big guy of about thirty. He told her, “Watch it, no funny business!” they said their goodbyes and kissed, she sat down, and we moved on. I arrived to Kharkov, but I hardly made five steps when someone assaulted me, started tugging my hands behind my back, putting handcuffs on me, kicking me in the lower back, ribs, and legs. They put a bag on my head, set me in a car, one person on each side of me; all this was, of course, accompanied by

swearing; they hit me in my liver area, on my head and neck. They led me into a building, then along corridors and stairways, up and down, then to another corridor, shoved me onto the floor, and the cell door was banged to. I lay there for two hours, bag on my head, and headphones on my ears. In a while, someone entered and removed the bag, and it was the guy that had been seeing that girl off. He told me that under the martial law, I would be executed by a firing squad, and my body dumped in a swamp. He punched me twice in the head, twice in the stomach, suggested I pray, put the bag back on, and went out. I lay there for some more time; then several people came, lifted me up, and led me away.

They took me to some other room, knocked me down, removed the handcuffs, started twisting my arms at elbows this way and that, and while doing it put machine gun bullets in my hands. They squeezed and twisted my arms, and one of them got hold of my neck and was strangling me so that I was out of air, and they kicked at my tailbone. Then they took me back to the first room, tied my arms with belts above elbow and at wrist level. I lay like that for a day, on the floor, my arms went numb, and I thought they were falling off. After that day I was taken to a small office: there was only one chair on which I sat, and a desk; a man was sitting on that desk, and it was the same guy from before, I later found out that he was a counter-intelligence officer and his name was Oleg. I was told, "You understand, you are a prisoner of war, no one is going to put you on trial, you will be executed." The officer who said that was playing a "good cop". Oleg didn't try talking at all, but got to beating me right away. I covered myself with my hands, bent down, he punched me in the back, the spine, the skull base, drove his knee into my head. Then again I was taken away, and again they didn't untie my arms, I was still in belts. I lay there some more time. The next day, as I understand, I was officially taken to the investigator, his name was Artyom. Oleg came, too, and slapped me a couple of times on the ears. The next day I was taken to court. There I was given detention in custody and taken back to the Kharkov SBU.'

Vladimir Kiruchenko talks about being beaten by SBU officers. He says, 'On 26 July I was captured and taken to the Kramatorsk airfield. The SBU officers themselves did not manhandle me – they would go away,

leaving me alone, and I would be beaten by servicemen of the 95th brigade. The troopers dislocated my jaw and injured one of my ribs. I was taken to the Kharkov SBU, placed in a separate room where three field operatives hand-beat me.'

Sergey Dvoretzky says, 'They beat me in the SBU, mainly hitting me in the kidneys and chest area. They would undress me, place me on the floor, step on my groin, and put a gun against my arm or leg. They were saying they would kill me or shoot me in the arm if I tried to run. They broke one of my ribs.'

Yury Novoseltsev who was subjected to the torture method called 'tumbler' says, 'No medical aid was provided at the pre-trial facility I was in'.

Vladimir, a DPR self-defense fighter, says, 'No medical help was given. Analgin was used as cure for any disease.'

In a number of cases victims were, after all, sent to hospitals and into surgery, but further adequate medical assistance was not provided. Stanislav Shchedrovsky, a victim who suffered electric shock torture and had his lung punctured, says, 'My head swelled up, my hand would not move, almost all of my ribs were broken, and my liver was dislocated. The detention facility did not take me in, but sent me to the hospital for surgery. Then I was returned to the detention facility, and no medical aid was provided there. They put a bag over my head; I could not breathe.'

Vast majority of the detainees questioned tell that by means of torture and threats the Ukrainian authorities made them sign confessions stating that they were agents of Russian secret service organisations. Overall majority of civilians captured by the Ukrainian Armed Forces could not endure the torture and threats, and signed any accusations relating to them.

For example, Sergey states, '...continued beating me on the way. The papers they had said some nonsense, that I was an agent of the Russian Security Service. They told me that if I didn't sign them, they would kill my wife. When in the SBU quarters, I signed everything. They broke three of my ribs while beating me on the bus.'

Ruslan Panchuk, a self-defense fighter, says:

'I was detained on my birthday. They hit me on the head, and then put a bag over it. Operatives in the SBU tormented us, threatened our families. I took the blame for everything, and they sent me to the detention facility. For a month I lived with a dislocated jaw.'

A large number of the victims questioned point out specific places where the National Guard and the Ukrainian Armed Forces have been using torture on a massive scale or give code names of the people who subjected them to torture. For example, the National Guard's Dnepr-1 practice ground in the Dnepropetrovsk area is mentioned. Vladimir Sevastiyarov who was detained on 4 September 2014 says, 'They tormented and humiliated us there, threw people into pits with snakes in them or forced us to dig our own graves.'

Igor Lyamin, another torture victim, also talks about that place and gives code names of those who tortured him: X, Albina, and Max.

Alexander Loshkarev tells how he had unknown medicinal drugs used on him and was subjected to torture and humiliation:

'I was accused of committing a terrorist act and assassination attempt against border patrol members. They started hitting me with clubs, kicked me in the head, then opened my mouth, and threw two cubes there that tasted sour. I started suffocating and losing consciousness.

Later, when I recovered, they gave me papers, and I signed them, and then they took me to the freezer. After that I was taken to the SBU quarters and there again given papers to sign. I refused to do it, and so four men in black uniform and masks, carrying guns, came into the office and started beating me. Then once more they began forcing me to sign those papers, and I did. They held us in the SBU for a while and then took us to the village, to the Dnepr-1 battalion. We were humiliated, thrown into pits with snakes; they fired shots near our heads and feet. Then I got out of the pit, and they made me crawl on the asphalt, on glass, and again fired next to my feet. When I reached the fence they gave me a shovel and said, "Dig a hole for yourself", and when I had done it, once more the shots were fired near my feet.'

Alexander Zolotukhin also gives code names of the people who tortured them. '...young men of 25-28 years old kicked us in the liver, the

kidneys... The first one went under the code name Tyoma, the second was Veter, and that one liked to jab an awl into my left shoulder blade.'

Also mentioned frequently are the Mariupol airport where detainees are kept in the industrial cold storage and subjected to torture, and the Kramatorsk airport.

Vadim Beloborod talks about receiving beatings and threats to his family. 'On 28 July I was captured in the Mariupol City Council. I was taken to the airport and put into the cold storage. There was not enough air. They hit me in the kidneys and knees, I lost consciousness, and my ribs were broken. The guard always shouted, and we were often beaten. They threatened to kill my family, my daughter.'

Denis Gavrilin, captured by the Ukrainian National Guard on 31 July 2014, talks about that place as well. 'I was taken to Mariupol, to the airport, where I was put in a cold storage cell that was switched off. There was no light, and everybody lay on the tile floor. It had vacuum operated doors, and you couldn't breathe, it was stuffy and suffocating.'

Others state that the storage was turned on to cool down the cell, and temperature fell to minus four. Alexander, captured on 4 August 2014, says, 'I was taken to the airport cold storage. Some shifts would forget to turn off the cooling, and the temperature would drop to minus four.'

Alexei Ovoev, a self-defense fighter, talks about people being tortured at the Kramatorsk airfield:

'I saw volley-fire systems being launched at the airfield. I was detained by SBU officers who brought me to the airfield and tortured me. I was hung by my arms in a pit: there were slabs, a rope attached to them, and handcuffs attached to the rope; I was stretched out there like that, and my eyes were covered. I was hit in the ribs, in the liver, and in the face. Everyone that was brought to that airfield was subjected to such torture and abuse. When men come to the temporary detention facilities, they are black and blue all over, beaten up, and some people's hearts just give out and they die. Ninety percent of those who come from that airfield are like that, all beaten and disfigured. The 95th brigade is there; there were foreigners with Georgian and Polish accents.

Then I was transferred to the Kharkov SBU where operatives also beat me in the interrogation cell, as soon as I arrived. I was there for a month and

a half, beaten black and blue. And while I was there they had my property, keys to the garage, to my car. They took computers and other technology from my house. For a month and a half they would not put forth any accusation against me.'

The victims interviewed also state that the Ukrainian side intentionally for long periods of time does not register its detainees and violates the procedure prescribed by law. For instance, Lilia Rodionova, representative of the Committee on Refugees and Prisoners of War, who herself was once detained by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, says, '...I was taken to the SBU, but according to the documents I was not there.' Alexei, a torture victim, also talks about document falsification by the Ukrainian Security Service. 'I was kept for several weeks in the SBU, and then they told me, "We are going to court, here's your summons, you had come to court yourself first when we had summoned you as a suspect, and then in a week we sent you another summons." I signed both.'

Based on the information collected by the Foundation, a clear conclusion can be drawn that most of the torture victims are not members of the Donetsk or Lugansk People's Republics' self-defense forces, but civilians. A 'reason' for arrest and torture of civilians by the Ukrainian side can be as simple as involvement in anti-Euromaidan rallies, participation in Russian TV shows, expression of your opinion on the Internet, involvement in pro-DPR rallies, participation in the referendum, 'possession of a telephone number of a Russian journalist', 'Caucasian names – Aslan, Uzbek' in the personal phone contacts, a phone conversation with people from 'the Donetsk People's Republic', 'receiving medical assistance in the DPR', etc. The same absurdity and lack of substantial evidence is characteristic of the other accusations.

For example, Andrey Tsayukov who is underage, 17-year-old victim, was captured for expressing his opinion on the Internet. He says, 'I was arrested by the Azov militants on 30 October 2014 in my house. They burst in, threw everybody onto the floor, and tied up our hands. They demanded that I gave them my phone to which my VKontakte group was linked. They confiscated the phone along with the SIM-card. I was taken to the

Mariupol SBU. On 8 November investigator M.M. Anischenko made me sign the document that said that I had given my consent to being detained for 72 hours. I also signed other papers — the accusations they presented against me.’

Victor Primak, 60-year-old victim, says that he was put through torture because of his phone conversations with a Donbass friend. ‘I have a friend whose son works in the DPR. I had often talked to him on the phone. In November 2014, armed people with yellow and blue ribbons on their sleeves came to my house. I live with my elderly mother. They started beating me in front of her and demanding I gave them my cell phone and papers. They took me to the checkpoint at the other bank of the Kalmius river. When we arrived they led me to an office and began questioning and beating me. They hit me very hard and used a shocker. I cried that I was telling them the truth, that I had heart problems, that I was 60 years old. I said that it had just been a phone conversation, but they started beating me again and told me they would inject me with a serum. Then I passed out.’

For example, Vladimir Kovalchuk, a self-defense fighter, says that in the SBU he was accused of selling a Kolchuga passive sensor unit. ‘I was organising humanitarian aid in Slavyansk, and with two clergymen we went to the Crimea. When we were coming back, SBU officers waited for us at the border. Trial was the next day: I was accused of selling the Kolchuga system, sending fighters to train camps, having acquaintances in the Vostok battalion, etc. They tried strangling me, and put something in my water... When I was in the detention facility one man said that they had been tortured by Nadezhda Savchenko who hit the men in the groins.’

Dmitry Vik says that he was arrested for cooperation with Russian TV channels. ‘On 25 November 2014, armed people stormed into my flat. Someone hit me on the chest with the barrel of an assault rifle, put me face down on the floor, and cuffed my hands behind my back. The attackers claimed they were from the Right Sector and threatened to kill me and “remind me about Odessa”; they said, “You are pro-Russian, you will pay for that.” My wife, mother, and son were in the flat, too. I thought I would die soon, and they would kill my family.’

In a half hour, they acknowledged they were from the SBU. Then, on their own, they searched through my flat. In the closet, they found grenades and guns; they called me in and asked what it was. I was outraged because they put their hands on everything, and these things had obviously been planted there. They went through the stuff that belonged to my mother and wife. They confiscated the jewelry, all of our money, all my pension and bank cards; now, after my arrest, my family has been left without any funds.

When I tried to ask questions they hit me. During the search, they accused me of cooperation with Russian TV channels. They confiscated my correspondence and my video reports for Rossiya-1 and Ren-TV where I worked as a freelance stringer. In March 2014, I participated in A. Mamontov's "Special Correspondent" program and in the "On Air Live" show with Boris Korchenyikov.

They blamed me for constantly complaining about the top leadership of Ukraine and said that the time has come to deal with me.

Alexei Borisovich Zhivov, SBU investigator, said that I would be deprived of retirement benefits and all property.'

Alexei Lukyanov, arrested by SBU officers, says, '...near Slavyansk, to Evgenyevka village where their headquarters and filtration camp, too, were located... there were very different people there, mainly Donbass residents. Each of them had their own story, but mostly they were people who were passing through a checkpoint and were deemed suspicious for some reason and sent for additional interrogations.

As an example, I can tell you of one case when a man was passing a checkpoint, and the officers took his phone, started looking through it and in contacts found names of people from the Caucasus – Aslan, Uzbek. They detained the man and stated he was a terrorist accomplice and knew all the Chechen militants. They took him away to a military box van and beat him for several days, asking him, "Where are the Chechens hiding?"

Some people were arrested only because when officers looked at their passports, they saw that all of their children's names were written in the same pen. The officers would claim, "The passport is fake, all of your children's name are written in the same pen", and the passport owner would say, "I had lost my passport, it was reissued, and the information

rewritten.” – “No, you are an agent”, – and he would be sent to a filtration camp, too.’

SBU officers captured Olga Egorova on 15 September 2014. She testifies, ‘They knocked interior and exterior doors down, surrounded my 14-year-old son and put a gun to his head. They arrested and took me to the SBU office, where I was immediately subjected to physical pressure, and then they started to threaten me, describing the tortures. They interrogated me for three days; during all of that time investigators were rotating. It was the end of the third day when they finally gave me some water and some food.

They accused me of taking part in rallies, supporting the DPR and participating in the 11 May referendum.’

In a large number of cases the Ukrainian authorities – to be able to exchange prisoners – would arrest citizens who have not committed any offence. For instance, Natalia Chernjavskaia, 58-year-old says, ‘They came to me and said that there’d been a call from my phone and I had to go with them. They took me to the airport, kept me in the cold storage, didn’t give me any food. The floors were tiled, and the cold storage engine was turned on every 20 minutes. They claimed I was a traitor to my country and would be given a life sentence. In the SBU, they quickly drew up all of the documents and sent them to the court. On the next day of my stay in the detention facility, I wrote a request to have everything explained to me, but I was not admitted. Then they led me away again, put me on the bus and said I would be taken to the prisoner exchange.’ Alexander says, ‘I was detained when entering Kharkov; I had been going to hand over a package to a person there, upon my friend’s request. Then I was sent to the SBU building. I was held there for half a year and released under prisoners of war exchange.’

In many cases Ukrainian civilians are also subjected to beatings and death threats to their families. For example, Gennady says, ‘I called my friend, we were going to the gym. At a bus stop I was pulled out of my car; none of them gave their names, they put me face down on the road pavement, kicked me in the ribs, broke my glasses, and injured my eye. They put a bag over my head, handcuffed me and set me in their car. In

the car I had to listen to threats to my family and myself. Finally, I lost consciousness. I came to my senses from the smell of ammonia. After arriving to the SBU, I saw that I had this eye injury. Then they took me to the exchange.'

Artyom Pavlechenko says, 'I was taken near the auto shop. They told me someone had pointed me out and claimed I was an accomplice... They brought me to their department, searched all through my car, beat and threatened me. They took away my phone and ID papers. However, there was no evidence, and they had to let me go. I returned home; then they called me and said that they still had my car papers. I went there again to get them back. They forced me to sign the documents. They beat me again, and then brought me to the hospital, asked me not to file any complaints. After that I was brought into trial and sentenced, and then taken to Kharkov, to the prison. I was there for one day, and then they exchanged me.'

Alexander Razmylin says that in some cases arrests are carried out with participation of the Right Sector and upon information received from it. 'I was pushed onto the ground and tied up. They said they were from the Right Sector. I was taken to the place of my official registration. They had a search order, and during the search they planted bullets in the flat. The SBU said they would disregard the bullets if I told everything. I told them I didn't know anything. After that they led me to the other room and beat me twice. They threatened to kill my family. Toward the evening, a lawyer came and demanded they call an ambulance. The ambulance arrived, and the medics gave me first aid, but I was refused hospitalisation unless I signed the report. So I did.'

In a significant number of cases, kidnappings, carried out by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces, are not subject to the legislation and such acts are not registered. The arrests are officially registered only after the detained persons sign confessionary statements, fabricated by the Ukrainian security forces.

For example, Olga Verbitskaya, a self-defense fighter, says, 'I was captured by the Right Sector. For seven days, they kept me in some mine galleries. They gave me no food and very little water. It was very cold there. They injected me with some drugs, beat me up with pieces of rebar and

detained me for seven days without registering. At any moment, they could take me out, execute and throw into some trash container and that would be it. After that, they handed me over to the SBU office.'

Mikhail Yakovlev, a torture victim, was arrested in late July 2014. He says, 'They brought me behind some garage complex, handcuffed me to a tree and started hand-beating me, kicking me, and hitting me with wooden sticks. Several times I lost consciousness from pain. They wanted to know about the self-defense forces. I said I had nothing to do with them. They took my money and told me to get home on my own. I returned home and rested for a while. Sometime in the beginning of August they came back. They brought me to the district department, began beating me, putting a bag over my head and not letting me breathe.'

Igor Karandin, a self-defense fighter, was captured on 20 November. He testifies, 'One day, five people wearing military uniform broke into my house. I was hit on the head with the blunt end of a gun, handcuffed and hooded. They brought me to some cellar and handcuffed me to a pipe. Two masked men came in and started beating me up, saying it was only the beginning. After that, they locked me in some meter wide cell with a bolted metal door. I spent the night in that "stone sack".'

They dragged me out of there in the morning. Six people were there. They back-handcuffed me and started beating me up. One of them was beating me on my back and legs with a knotted rope; another one was hitting me on my feet with some chain.

They repeatedly hit me with a stun gun. One man was pouring water on me, the other one used the stun gun. I fainted after the third time they did it. The whole procedure was repeated.

After that, I was thrown into the "stone sack" again, wearing nothing but my underwear, and spent the night there. Every hour they would hit the door with some metal stick and ask my name. This was going on for nine days, I think. I did not eat during all of that time due to continuous vomiting. My whole body was covered with bruises and blood.

In Kharkov, they reported to have allegedly detained me at the Izium railway station carrying a grenade, a portable radio and a bulletproof jacket.'

The Ukrainian armed forces and security forces quite often torture and inject people with psychotropic drugs at the same time.

G. Maysky, a self-defense fighter, was captured by the Aidar battalion talks about being injected with psychotropic drugs and then tortured with a stun gun: ‘Aidar battalion officers tortured and starved me, while keeping me bound and blindfolded. Then they took me to the SBU office in Starobilsk, where I spoke with the investigator E. Tkachenko. After I refused to testify, a doctor gave me an injection and they started hitting me with a stun gun. I could not remember anything after that. Later, I saw my signature on the testimony.’

Pavel Sikorski, a victim, tells about being injected with psychotropic drugs, ‘On 2 October, the National Guard detained and took me to the Mariupol airport. At first, they were hitting me in the stomach, legs and shoulders. Then they made me take some pills. They shoved those pills in my mouth and poured some water down my throat. Then they gave me an injection. After that I started feeling bad, everything became blurry and that is the last thing I remember. I woke up in the refrigerator.’

A number of victims, subjected to torture by the Ukrainian armed forces and security forces, also claim to have been robbed. For example, Vasily Matsvey, a member of self-defense forces, says, ‘I was arrested on 19 November by the SBU officers and then taken to Kramatorsk, where they tortured me. They tried to hang me on a hook by my rib. Then they tied me up to a grating on the floor, kicked and hooded me, hit me on my feet and kidneys with a stick. They tries to scare me with a gun and hit me on the head. From time to time, they would pour cold water on me, so I would not lose consciousness. On the fourth day, I was brought to the SBU office in Poltava. The doctors examined me, gave me a chest X-ray and reported the beatings as “resisting arrest”, even though I never fought back.

While arresting me, those looters took everything of value they could carry away.’

Participants of the Kulikovo Pole (Kulikovo Field), a movement fighting against “Euromaidan”, who were transferred under a prisoner exchange, talk about being tortured and robbed by the SBU officers. Alexander Yakimenko, a 65-year-old victim, says, ‘On the eve of the 2 May

events I was the commandant of the Orthodox tent camp on the Kulikovo field, set up by the Union of Orthodox Citizens of Ukraine. On 9 July 2014 I was detained by the SBU officers of the Odessa region.

During a search of my apartment, 4,000 hryvnas in cash, 5 bank cards, Soviet Air Force dagger dirk (memory of my father, a veteran of three wars) and some other personal belongings were stolen. All this was done under the supervision of Major Ivan Nechiporuk, an investigator, and Captain Mandrik, operations officer. A month later, my retirement benefit of 2,050 hryvnas was withdrawn from my stolen pension card.

The beatings started right from the moment they brought me to the SBU office in Odessa region. They handcuffed my hands above my head, hooded me and started running down the hallways, dragging me around with them. They stopped only when lost consciousness for the third or the fourth time. Then they poured some water on me and operations officer Mandrik started asking me questions on how long I'd been working for the GRU and the FSB.'

Yurii Trofimov, a 60-year-old victim, also tells about SBU officers robbing his house: 'I was the deputy commandant of the Orthodox tent camp on the Kulikovo field. During clashes with radical ultranationalist groups, I managed to hide a group of Odessa citizens on the roof of the House of Trade Unions during the fire. I was only able to get down from the roof in the morning, along with 4 other people that I saved. On 9 July 2014, I was detained by the Alpha unit SBU officers. Major Ivan Ignatovich was in charge of my arrest. They did not show me a search warrant or bring any witnesses or provide me with a lawyer. During the arrest, they broke the right side of my face and left a lot of scratches and bruises on my right shoulder and my knees. The search was conducted randomly with each officer stealing whatever he wanted. One of them pulled 500 hryvnas out of my coat, the Major stole two gold rings and watches, another one stole a new camera. They also stole a printer, flat-panel monitors, some medical devices and other stuff.'

Pavel Karakozov, a tortured by the Ukrainian security forces officers, also talks about the loss of valuable items during the search. He talks about what happened after he had been captured by the Azov battalion in

Mariupol: 'Before that, I was organizing a referendum in Mariupol. I was taking part in the preparation work and holding the referendum. On 12 July, after leaving work I drove to the territory of the enterprise I used to work for, it was my personal business, I was captured by men wearing military uniform there, who immediately hooded me and started beating me up.

Many valuables were gone after the search of my apartment. My wife filed a complaint to the police about our money and gold items being stolen.

Upon arrival at the Mariupol airport, I was beaten up and thrown into a basement. A few hours later, they lifted me up and beat me up until I was losing consciousness. Then they called for a doctor and gave me an injection; after that, I was taken to the basement again. Then the torture went on in the morning and evening. The next day I was transferred to an individual cell of the prison truck, which was parked in the sun for a day. Before that, they offered the guards to beat me up and they did it with pleasure.

After I spent three days in that cell, they took me out to interrogate and I had a blood-stroke. After that I was always half conscious.

Then they tried to drown me. They put a piece of cloth on my face; four strong men were holding both my hands. The fifth guy was pouring water on the cloth and after it got all wet I started breathing in water. Due to lack of air (the cloth on my face was all wet), I started breathing in water they were pouring down on me and suffocating. I'm not sure, but, to my mind, it's even worse than drowning.

Later on, I lost track of time, interrogations and tortures. After being forced to spend time in the prison truck, I was thrown into the refrigerator at the same airport. I spent three days in the temporary detention facility, as the pre-trial detention center refused to take me in because of the beatings I suffered, they refused to take me in until the doctors were sure I would stay alive.

Before exchanging prisoners in Mariupol, they had a "farewell party" for us – they made us run through a gauntlet on our hunkers and beat us on our backs with rubber sticks.'

PART II.

Torture and inhuman
treatment:
victims' testimonies

Below are some detailed stories of the people who were subjected to torture by servicemen of the National Guard, the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and the SBU.

Tatiana Zemlenuhina, representative of the NGO 'Planeta Rebenka' (Child's planet), testifies, 'Our office is located in Kiev on 4b Grushevskaya street, right behind the Dnipro hotel. During the January-February 2014 events I actively assisted Berkut and the internal military forces as a volunteer of the Ivan Protsenko group. At the same time I was a member of the "Clean Kyiv" and the national liberation movements. I took part in rallies against the events in Maidan square, in front of the US embassy and the court, in Bessarabia square. I contacted "Russia-1", a Russian TV channel, on this matter. I also participated in a Crimean TV show called "Ukraine is on fire. No fording point".'

My associates informed me that I was on the Right Sector's lists. For this reason, I decided to leave Kiev for Crimea. Then I decided to go back. On 9 July, I went took a train in Sevastopol. After crossing the border I was taken off the train. They put me and all of my personal belongings into a car and drove somewhere. Later I was told that it was the SBU building in Zaporozhye. I was subjected to psychological pressure and received threats of killing my family.'

Igor Lyamin, detained on 14 September by members of the Dnepr battalion, talks in detail about how he was tortured: put on a rack, on

a 'swing', shocked by electric current; how his wife was captured and tortured as well. He also gives code names of those who subjected him to torture at the Dnepr-1 base:

'I was captured by the Dnepr battalion. I had gone fishing, and they detained me, took me to the local police station and immediately began beating me. For that, they used everything at hand – sticks, their own feet; they hit me on the head with their guns. My head was swollen with so many lumps that it looked like a hedgehog. Then they put me on the rack – it means arms drawn behind your back, your hands in handcuffs. They twisted my arms mercilessly. Then they made something they called a "swing". It's a long hexagonal crowbar. Your hands are in handcuffs under your legs, and the crowbar is pushed through. They would swing me around by this bar, and then leave me hanging on it. My bones almost pushed out through my skin. My hands are still not working properly in those parts. Last time they held me there for 20 minutes, then released me and started to pour water over me and use shockers. This went on until I began to black out.

They would not let me sleep. If I started falling asleep, the torments were repeated. It turned out they tortured my wife, too. They took her and held her in the cell next to mine. They broke all of the toes on her left foot. I signed every paper with accusations against me and was taken to the SBU. I still don't know what they wanted to find out. And I have no idea why they needed to do all those things they did to me. I studied history and even Germans would not torture people like those men did.

After the detention we were sent to Dneprodzerzhinsk, to the Dnepr-1 base. Code names of those who served there are X, Albina, and Max. They tormented us any way they wanted: they fired above our heads. Nearly everyone had broken limbs, but still they made us do push-ups. They almost buried one man alive in a pit. They wanted to kill me. This lasted for four days, and then we were taken to the Kharkov SBU for exchange.

There I had an ulceration. I was taken to the ambulance service in Kharkov. The doctors gave me an endoscopy and did all the tests, my

ulcer was bleeding badly. But the thing is, they'd taken me in under a false name. They said, just give them any fake name and address.

The doctors wanted to hospitalise me but were forbidden to do that. I was brought back to the SBU, and until I was exchanged I had to suffer unbearable pain. This ulcer added to the bruise marks all over my body.'

Dmitry Ermakov, another torture victim, was a member of the 'Anti-Maidan' movement in Mariupol. On 18 September 2014 the Ukrainian National Guard officers captured him near his home. He testifies, 'A foreign car with no license plates was parked outside the house. When I was passing by that car, 4 people in camouflage and masks armed with automatic weapons came out. They brought me to the territory of Mariupol airport where the bases of the National Guard were located. After we came there, I spent one and a half hours on my knees. If my responses were negative or evasive they threatened to torture, cripple or kill me. On 20-23 September, I was locked in the refrigerator. On 21 September, they brought a badly beaten young man whose last name was Makarenko and locked him in the refrigerator. He was detained while working at the Azovstal production facility in the middle of the day because he let his friend and the friend's comrade, members of the Vostok battalion, stay at his place.

Late in the evening of 21 September, they brought two more guys. According to what they told, they were detained because they approached the Armed Forces of Ukraine checkpoint in the dark. They did not drive into the checkpoint, they turned the car around and went back to their village. They explained their actions by saying that they had been intoxicated and decided to check out the new car. They said that they had almost made it to the village when the Ukrainian Armed Forces officers caught up with their car and fired at it and without warning, forcing them to stop. They beat the guys up and shot into the ground next to their heads.

Later, they brought a few young people detained for fishing near the fence of the Azov sea harbor. They told another detainee that they had been beaten up and tortured with electroshock on their way to the airport.'

Pavel testifies that the reason for his arrest and torture was his telephone conversation with a deputy of the Donetsk People's Republic. 'First they talked politely to me, but then a man entered and started kicking me in the ribs. I felt sick, and they gave me a pill. I had convulsions and my body went numb. They wanted me to confess that I was a gun spotter. However, this is not true. They'd monitored my phone conversations, but I had just talked to a deputy of the Donetsk People's Republic, nothing more. They took me to the Dnepr-1 practice ground, and there they would simply throw people in three meter deep pits for no reason whatsoever, and made us dig graves.'

Denis Gavrilin, detained by the Ukrainian National Guard on 31 July 2014 at a checkpoint and given over to the Azov battalion, says, 'Interrogations were every two or three hours. There were lots of things. They were drowning me. My eyes were covered – they would put a towel or a rag over my face. I could not see. Also, my hands were cuffed behind me. Moreover, holding my head from behind, after placing this rag on my face, they poured water down on me. I am not sure, from a bottle, or a kettle, maybe... I could not see. But it felt like drowning. Then they would bring me back to life. And again. I had already had a knee broken, and they saw the girdle on my leg, on my knee, and broke it anew. This happened on the first day. Then they put needles under my toenails. This felt as if someone was drawing tendons out of my neck. Like everything is drawn out of me, and the pain leaves me numb.

They would throw me in a pit with dead bodies. There were firing squad executions. They would push you in that pit, and there's that special smell associated with such an execution. But there were many other things. I know a guy who got four of his front teeth pulled out with pliers. And I saw a lot of people I knew put on those "swings" with crowbars.'

Valery Borzov, Krasnoarmeysk citizen, tells about being tortured by the SBU officers, 'On 7 November 2014 I was detained by the SBU officers and taken to some basement in Krasnoarmeysk. They were beating me on the head, legs, back, and kidneys in that basement. During that time, I lost consciousness twice, but they poured some water on

me and I regained consciousness. During the torture, I was beaten and kicked in the head and stomach and I lost consciousness again. They sat me down on my knees, beat me on my legs, and then hanged me up by my hands, which were ties behind my back (“a swallow”) on some chain or some rope and beat me up severely. After that they put me down and repeatedly hit me on the head with some bars.

After that, they put me on a chair and gave me a text that I had to read out on camera. Threatened with violence against my family, I did it.’

Pavel Borisov, a self-defense fighter, tells the story on how the National Guard tortured him and tore his wounds open, ‘I was taken hostage on 19 July 2014. I was ambushed from three directions and taken hostage while being in critical condition. They tortured us there. They used to hit us in the heads and press on our wounds that immediately started to bleed. I have six bullet wounds and a shrapnel wound. They dragged us around, tortured and insulted us and took us out for execution.

The SBU sent us to the city of Kramatorsk where we spent a day at the hospital, then they took us to the SBU office in Kharkov, but they did not take us in, so we were sent back to the hospital again.

I lost a lot of blood; they hit my wounds, pressed on my shrapnel and bullet wounds, put their fingers into my bullet holes, twisted them there and laughed. They watched me bleed. They filmed their tortures and mockeries. It was the National Guard servicemen who did that. The next day they came to take us away and shoot us dead, but some other security guards did not let them do that.

The doctors did not even try to get the shrapnel out. One bullet was stuck in my arm and had broken the bone in two pieces; the doctors did not do anything about it because they just did not care. They applied some ointment and gave me some injections to relieve the pain. They did everything they could to stop me from bothering them, saying that my wounds would “heal on their own”, “they would fester for some time and eventually heal, it is no big deal.” I still have bullets in my body.

Then the doctors took me to the SBU office again even though I did not recover yet and had festering wounds. In the hospital there were

people who were beaten up, had swastikas and “SS” letters burnt into their skin. Other people had broken bodies and faces, they were just unrecognizable, beaten up like boxing pears. Every part of their bodies was beat off with meat hanging from their bones.’

Andrei Panchenko, a self-defense fighter, was detained on 14 January 2015. He says, ‘My friends asked me to drive them to the city of Dokuchaevsk. We stopped at the Ukrainian checkpoint. They threw us on the floor, tied our hands, legs, beating us from time to time, pulled a hat on my head and wrapped it around with tape so it would be hard to breathe. They threw us into their car and drove away. When we arrived, they threw us in some dark room and began to carry us out one by one, as we were all tied up. They put me on a chair and held my feet under it and my hands behind my back. Then they started hitting me on the legs and on the shoulders with a hammer, an ordinary hammer. They kept doing it until I lost consciousness. This was going on for three days. From time to time, they would put me to a wall, make shots close to me and say that one day a bullet might hit me. On the 13th day, in the evening, a car pulled up and they took all of us away, having said that civilians should be killed. And when it came to the two of us who had a ID cards – we were supposed to be taken to the police and prison. We drove for a long time, when we finally arrived, we were tied up with hats covering our eyes. The first day passed with no one communicating with us at the SBU office. Only then they started taking us out for questioning, one by one. After I told them what I had already told the military men, they hit me in the groin with a shocker and added voltage, because it kept getting more and more painful. It hurt so bad. I fell down, shouting: “Just shoot me, why are you torturing me? I do not know anything.” After that, an investigator came in and said that I was in the legal field.’

Vladimir Sevostyanov was captured on 4 September 2014 by people in civilian clothes and balaclavas, and taken to the Mariupol airport. He says, ‘On arrival they led me to a room and started tormenting me using a shocker on my forearm and heart area. They were drowning me. My head in a bag, they would force it down into water and not let

me go until I started to black out. After all of that they tried to force me to sign some papers. I refused. They put me in a cell. The next day they took me again. They put a wet rag on my face and poured water over it. I began suffocating, and to make me suffocate even more they would also use a shocker on me. They hit me very hard on my back. My kidneys hurt for a long time after.

Then they brought me to Dnepr-1 near Dnepropetrovsk, where they have a practice ground. There they abused and humiliated us, threw people into pits with snakes and made us dig graves for ourselves. They tormented people horribly; I have no words to describe it.'

Konstantin Afonchenko says that he was arrested for having the telephone number of a Russian journalist, and gives an example of how the Ukrainian Forces sent detainees to the mine field: 'On 18 August 2014, I was arrested at a Ukrainian checkpoint for having a Russian journalist's number in my phone. At the interrogation they gave me an injection, and I felt very sick. I started to lose consciousness, but they wanted my testimony. They began threatening that if I did not admit to being a separatist, they would not give me an antidote. I didn't care anymore, and I signed the papers just to make the pain go away. They gave me that antidote, and I did in fact feel better. Then there were threats of execution. After that, they sent me to Kramatorsk. There I was put in a pit, beaten and verbally abused from time to time. Then new people were brought in and all attention was drawn to them. A trooper approached one of those newcomers and led him and one other guy away. Later we found out that they were taken to a minefield. We were in such a state that each day we wanted to fight for our lives less and less. Of the people, I'd seen two or three would not return. In about three days they loaded us in a car and took us away. There were six of us. While we were on the way, we felt more at ease and started talking to each other. One of us, his last name was Kharitonov, had a face that looked like a giant bruise. I also saw how they brought in a guy and began beating him. They were asking if he helped to organise the referendum. He said, yes, and they accused him of being a separatist. Self-defense fighters were beaten and, as I heard put on hooks. The SBU

has this practice: if you admit to being guilty, the prosecutor would ask for the minimum sentence for you. Many could not stand the treatment and agreed.'

D. Busaragin, DPR self-defense fighter, tells how he was tortured in Donbass, a pro-Ukrainian battalion: 'They kicked me in the head, chest and back. They shot near my face.'

Sergey Paratsa, a member of self-defense forces, speaks about being tortured by the SBU officers and then transferred to the Donbass battalion, which was headed by a Georgian mercenary: 'They took us out into the woods, beat us up and shot with a machine gun over our heads. The SBU officers were beating me with some metal object during interrogations. Then the SBU officers handed me to the Donbass battalion in Dnepropetrovsk. They were headed by a Georgian mercenary, a colonel.

Yaroslav Yarovoy, a self-defense fighter, tells how he was beaten up and strangled: 'They started strangling me and repeatedly hit me on the head with a grip of a gun. They took me to the city police department in Severodonetsk. They took my shirt off and started kicking me in the chest. They beat me up with a rubber stick and threatened to put a knife through my leg. They kept strangling and beating me up.'

Vasily Kharitonov, a DPR self-defense fighter detained near the village of Petrovskoe on 18 August says, 'The Ukrainian military convoy saw our car and started firing at it. We were captured, handcuffed and shoved into an APC. On the way we met two civilian cars and they fired at those from an APC too. One guy was still alive and they took him as well, tied him up and threw him in the vehicle. They brought civilians and us to the base. They hit us on the fingers, knees and lower back with a hammer. They injured my head and broke my fingers. They threatened to put me on a stake or saw my leg and arm off with a chainsaw. In the night they tied me to a tree and their leader came wielding a hammer and began questioning me. I said I didn't know anything. He hit my leg with a hammer. Then they dragged me to a pit. Two people were taken to the minefield. There were seven explosions. They were going to execute me. They told me to pray. I asked them

to untie my hands, said it was my last wish. He asked if I knew what holiday it was that day. I replied yes, it was the Day of Our Saviour. He said I was lucky and could consider this day me second birthday. They led me to the pit, there were chains hanging. Then I gave my testimony which they filmed.'

The story of a well-known Ukrainian sports trainer Pyotr B. Gilyov is available online. Let us cite his own words: 'I am a trainer, I have built a public sports organization. I was involved in establishing the Donetsk Republic. They [Ukrainian military — Ed.] knew that I was on the bus and they brought me out. That was a pure abduction. They brought me out of the bus and threw me to the ground... put a bag on my head, tied my hands and then I overheard a conversation and learned by chance that I was handed to Right Sector. Those latter did whatever they wanted to me. They are sadists. They get satisfaction from beating people and seeing people suffer and insulting them. I don't even know what they wanted from me. They would say whatever they wanted and answer their own questions; they weren't merely beating me, but rather trying to mutilate me just for the sake of it.

There were several of us there. We were all almost executed by firing squad several times and one of us was finally killed. He ran when they brought us out and they shot him dead.

They are pitiless. A human life means nothing to them. And no one holds them accountable if they shoot people dead, nobody cares. No one would ever ask them why they did that. In other words, those people do whatever they want. This gang is not solely Ukraine's problem. Indeed, Ukraine could cope with nothing and no one. I want the international community to learn about them because when they try to escape every one of them will go to Europe. They have tasted blood, they can obey no person and no law at all. This would be an enormous and extremely serious problem for the international community, for peaceful Europeans.

They were especially curious to hear that I was a karate trainer, a world champion and European champion. Having learned that they started torturing me with enormous ghoulish joy. It seemed to drive

them mad that I got up time after time and they did not know what to do with me. That was the time they took up baseball bats, gun butts and bladed weapons. They would come in every 25-30 minutes and beat me for half an hour just for the sake of it or for the sake of some infernal experiment...

Later on, I was taken by another battalion. You know how they did it? Just tied my hands behind my back and put a bag on my head again. In fact, I don't even know how I survived. They threw me on the back seat of a car and sat on me. That was how we travelled for several hours to Dnepropetrovsk. For the first three days I could neither get up, nor lie down myself. My cellmates helped me and held me by my arms. I had nothing to eat for about five days.

...It was also hard at the SBU because there they tried to provoke me. In their basement they handcuffed me to a pipe. There was no toilet, neither anything else. A man came and gave us food once a day. Therefore, we had to sit on the concrete floor, handcuffed to the heating radiator for two more days.

The SBU has mercy to no one. They maim people. Those who tell things there can hardly be blamed as few people could stand their torture. I know a family, one of them is a teacher of Russian, the SBU took her out of her apartment, and that was it.'

YurI Yurchenko, an actor and a playwright residing in France became a war reporter and was seized by the Ukrainian Donbass battalion. Let us cite his story, though somewhat abridged, for journalists.

'In the morning of 10 June 2014 I arrived at Donetsk. There was a tent where one could enlist in self-defense forces. I enlisted. There were some more volunteers. Then they ranged us and lead somewhere. I had a feeling that I was walking to my death. I couldn't fight. I had never served in the army in fact. But I couldn't do otherwise. That was how I joined self-defense.

When my comrade Andrey Stenin was killed, two more war reporters were killed with him, Andrey Vyachalo and Sergey Korenchenkov. It was by mere chance that I was in a different car as

usually we moved around together. Korenchenkov was my roommate. Stenin was at the backseat and two war reporters were at the front seats. They were wearing military uniform and had assault rifles. Drunken national guards shot the car. That day they had lied in ambush by the road. When they saw that journalists were in the car, they pulled it away from the road and set it on fire. That was why it took so long to find Stenin... 95 percent of Western journalists come with pre-set cliché's in their heads and care nothing about what happens in reality... I was taken prisoner on the morning of 19 August. The guys said I should be given a lift to Ilovaisk. I sat at the backseat and off we went. Then I noticed that they had taken that very road through Zugress. Then there was a storm of gunfire. When we got out of the car, they threw us to the ground and tied our arms behind our backs. After that, they started to beat the tied people. They beat us with gun butts, with their feet, they hit us on our heads and knifed and bayoneted us. The blood was pouring down my face... I saw a foreigner wearing a NATO uniform and helmet. He looked very different from the Ukrainians and spoke with an accent. He approached me and said, "I've given up my business in New York because of you, you motherfucker." Then he swung me. Then he ordered us to run across the bridge. He was a US citizen of Ukrainian origin, a businessman... Another one, a thug called Semyorka smashed me to the ground and started booting me on my ribs. Then others came to beat me too. I felt my ribs were fractured and saw another boot about to hit my chest. I wanted to get up and realized I could not. The pain in my chest was so awful I didn't even notice how I was hit on my leg with a gun butt or something...

Then they brought us all to a school. There was some metal closet for tools. It was dark there and the closet was full of dust and dirt, nothing to sit on and no air to breathe. My face was covered in blood. But I had nothing of what other guys had to go through. I heard how they were made to run around the yard and crawl on all fours crying "Glory to Ukraine and glory to the heroes!", "Ukraine above all!" Isn't the 'Deutschland über alles' come back? And after that they asked us, "Where have you seen fascists?" What is it they are doing? Our

locker was near the school workshop where kids have their vocational training, where there are workbenches. They brought the guys into that room and I heard them ask, "What am I taking, your finger or your ball? A finger or a ball? So?" Later on, I learned that they put the group leader's testicles in a screw vice and made another one, the driver screw it tighter. We spent six days in the locker, I mean Miro a Slovak self-defense fighter and I...

When I was brought to my first interrogation, there was a Georgian named Irakly Gurgenovich. I don't know what his surname was. He was an intelligence adviser at the Donbass battalion. Later I learned that he had served 22 years in intelligence services and had fought in Abkhazia, Ossetia and abroad since the age of 18. He had studied in the US. During Saakashvili's presidency he was a senior official in Georgia... They were preparing to retreat. Once again, someone ordered to shoot the prisoners, but first, we were to put on military uniform. Then suddenly Irakly showed up. He just pushed me in a car...

In the town of Kurakhovo we were all thrown to some basement. At any moment the guards could break in and beat us with gun butts. They made the guys scratch Ukrainian anthem on the wall with a spoon and learn it by heart. They had to sing it every time the guards broke in. They also had to shout "Glory to Ukraine!" There was a sadist cook. He came often and beat the guys. Once he also hit me on my head and made me bleed. I was taken to the doctor and the one who accompanied me left me for a moment. I was standing by the wall on crutches. The cook looked down on me and asked, "So? Glory to Ukraine?" I said nothing. Then he hit me on my head with a bottle full of water. "Glory to Ukraine?" I was bleeding... There was an investigator. A very well-read and educated man. He quoted Jung, Freud, Nietzsche and Mein Kampf. An advocate of the overman concept. A professional. He was an expert in psychological treatment of prisoners... He told me, "It would be a piece of cake to get these guys of yours write everything we need. That you were their leader, that they accompanied you and that you were armed to the teeth. We will make you an international super terrorist and offer you to France in exchange for what we require. We

will get everything we want for you. And if they don't agree, you will simply kick the bucket in this cellar..."

Irakly personally took care of the exchange. Certainly, they got a deal for me, a Georgian and two Donbass battalion commanders. Later on one of the exchanged officers named Chaikovskiy (call-sign Artist) said at a press conference in Kiev that they were exchanged for a group of Russian Army soldiers. '

Dmitry Propihaylo says, 'I was captured at a Ukrainian checkpoint, then brought somewhere and locked up in a container that resembled a refrigerator, there was fish in it. I was held there for two days and then brought to some hangar. Once we got there, they started hitting (mostly kicking) me in the kidneys. They said they had allegedly found a DPR identification document and 5.45x39 M74 intermediate cartridges among my belongings. Then another man joined them and they put me into a trunk and tied me up with handcuffs to the spare wheel. They took me to Volnovakha and beat me up there again. Then they brought us to the SBU office in Mariupol and threw us into a basement. Then they started beating us up again. After that, they took us to the temporary detention facility. Since then no one interrogated us, no one came or asked any questions. And then we were convicted.'

Sergey Sherlovtsov, a self-defense fighter speaks about provocations of the SBU. Having lied about being officers of the Federal Security Service of Russia the SBU, officers simulated an attack on a Ukrainian army battalion. After this provocation they stopped hiding the fact that they belonged to the SBU and started beating up the hostage and his son. Threatening to kill his son, they forced the self-defense fighter to plead guilty to the charges. Sergey who was the victim, says:

'In the middle of August my son and I were captured by six SBU officers; they tied our eyes and hands and threw us into a car. They drove through the city with us all tied up in the truck and then brought us to an abandoned hangar in to an abandoned the suburbs (I could tell by the sounds). They said they were FSB officers trying to save us from SBU. They also said they had allegedly brought us to a Lieutenant Colonel of the Russian armed forces. After that they tied our eyes and

hands again and took us to some forest where we stayed deep into the night. Then they put my son and me into the officers' car again playing the same game. They drove us about one hundred kilometres, then they untied us and said that they had an operation planned to attack a Ukrainian battalion by fire. One of them took a grenade gun out of the trunk and sat in the front seat of a car, they drove about 700 metres down some dark alleys. Then we heard rifles firing into the air, the door swung open and they threw my son and me out of the car and started beating us up. There was a professional spotlight set up there and they took some pictures of us. After that, they put bags on our heads, threw us down on the concrete floor and began kicking us and breaking our hands.

Then they finally said they were SBU investigators. They asked me only one question, "Do you want your son to live?" "Of course," I said. They responded, "In that case you will sign a protocol of detention." I said, "I have no choice." They had already prepared the protocols. We signed them and they immediately took us to the SBU office. The investigator came in the morning, but he didn't ask many questions. In fact, they already had everything they needed for the case.

They said it was important for me to keep quiet and not to object during the court session. The judge delivered her verdict and we were brought to the temporary detention facility. But before that an investigator came up to us and said that since there was no conflict between us and them they would treat us well.'

Nicolai Smirnov, captured by Ukrainian armed forces on 8 August 2014 says, 'My friend and I were driving in a car. Some armed men carrying assault rifles stopped us, threw us on the concrete ground and put bags on our heads; after that, they forced us into a car and drove off.

I am sure we were in Kramatorsk. They have a military base and an airfield there. There was always a humming sound most likely made by helicopters. From time to time they would take us to the street, beat us and make threats saying, "We will shoot you," "We will shoot you in the leg", "We will hand you over to a commanding officer who lost many soldiers; his officers will kill you."

Something else happened while we were in the car: there were six of us when we departed, one of us had no documents on him, but they were told that it was impossible to get in without documents. Most likely, they were talking about Kharkov. They took him out of the car right in the middle of the road and we heard several bursts of automatic gunfire, then they closed the car door again, started the engine and continued driving.

They would twist our arms, hit and kick us in the kidneys and in the liver. Upon our arrival to Kharkov, one of the men who was in the car with us was immediately taken to the hospital intensive care unit in. He had a surgery and then they brought him back to the SBU office.'

Yuri Bondarenko, also a self-defense fighter, says, 'A city shuttle brought me to a National Guard's checkpoint. I saw a dark young man who had not even reached the age of twenty, he was undressed all blue and beaten up, his face was badly messed up, his body was covered in bruises and he was shaking. And they shot him. An officer came from the back – he was the one to give all the orders – and shot him in the temple. As for me, they kept beating me up and hanging me up with my hands tied behind my back. This is how I spent three days there.

Some time later, they brought four more young men and started beating them up severely doing the same to me from time to time. Once they put us all into a lorry mostly made of iron; it was very hot inside and hard to breathe. They drove us around in it for twenty minutes before I started to lose consciousness – one of my ribs pierced a lung. Some old man even had his diaphragm ruptured with intestines falling out. They did not beat us at the SBU office. No medical assistance was provided unless they saw someone blacking out or dying. My ribs are now dented inwards. I can no longer feel the upper side of my thumbs. My head and body were all covered in bruises. They brought a young man from Luhansk captured by the Aidar battalion. His whole body was blue, he resembled one big bruise. Another young man came with us, he was tortured – they shot a bullet through his leg and cut his finger. Some men told us that they made our guys run through a minefield. Out of ten people only five came back.'

Denis Balbukov, a victim, testifies having been tortured for five days by the SBU officers in Kramatorsk: 'At first, they were just beating me up, broke two ribs and my right leg, then tried to intimidate me by shooting. They hit me with a shocker gun until I lost consciousness. After that they would make me regain consciousness by pouring some cold water on and kept doing it until I lost consciousness again. They tortured me for 5 days in the SBU office. After that they drove me to the Slavyansk airport, tied me up to an armoured vehicle and forced me to run after it. When I fell down they began beating me up.'

Aleksey Lukyanov, arrested on 20 June 2014 by the SBU officers says, 'I was captured by some unknown men wearing police uniform. They twisted my arms, threw me down with my face to the ground, hit me a few times in my body and head, put a bag on my head, forced me into a car and drove somewhere. I think it was a SBU base disguised as a carwash, where for a few days I was being interrogated, beaten up, put under psychological pressure and humiliated.

Then they put me into a SUV going to Evgenyevka village, situated in the outskirts of Slavyansk, where their headquarters also used as a filtration camp were located. . There were two military box vans in that filtration camp that served as places of temporary detention. Basically, there were two cars with small trailers spanning 16 or 20 square metres. I spent more than 20 days there and every day there were different people brought.

Beatings were conducted on a regular basis. They would wake me up at night, take me out of that box van and bring me handcuffed and hooded to some military men for interrogation. I remember being put on a chair and hearing questions coming from different directions, and then they would start hitting me in the head.

Detention conditions at the filtration camp were absolutely dreadful. People had to sit around handcuffed with a bag on their head or with a plastic bag fixed with tape around their eyes. When there was a shortage of handcuffs, they started using tie wraps to tie our hands and fingers. Of course, they used to tie them up pretty tight. The worst thing happened when they filled this box van with people up to

its limits, 17 or 18 men were sitting in the 20 square metres room. For several days there was no place to lie down. At times when there were too many people there, they stopped taking us out to the latrine; they just put a bucket in the corner and everyone urinated into that bucket.

They used to put us into a pit as well. There was a five metres wide pit and they would bring us there one by one or all at the same time. Sometimes we stayed in that pit for several days under the rain ankle-deep in water.

After that they brought me to the SBU detention centre. The cells there were cleaner and much more comfortable and we were being fed. The SBU officers did many things they will have to pay for. When the time came for me to come before the court, I had blood stains on my t-shirt as a result of “talks” they had with me, but they made me take it off and put on a clean shirt. The court sentenced me to a pre-trial detention and I was sent to the temporary detention facility and was exchanged later.’

Vladimir Bezymianny, a victim, tells how the SBU officers broke his ribs and forbade hospitalizing him: ‘On 23 October I was detained by the Odessa regional administration of the SBU. After being arrested I was subjected to physical torture – beaten with rifle butts and kicked. The beatings resulted in broken ribs and a traumatized spine. I could barely move for several days. I was sent to a hospital, where the doctors wanted hospitalize me, but the SBU officers forbade them to do it.

They also threatened to let the Right Sector have my family’s address.’

Alla, the President of the humanitarian fund, says, ‘The National Guard detained us according to some list. They had something against me probably because I was helping the citizens. They told me to put my hands on the car and after that they put a bag on my head and taped it up tightly. My vein was pressed and I couldn’t move my head for three days. When I asked them to ease my sufferings because it felt like my head was about to explode they said, “You separatist are going to die. Do you have any idea how many of you are buried here?”

Eventually they brought us to the Kramatorsk airport. What was happening there was worse than any nightmare. They did not just torture people. They hit my husband in the liver just to make me say that Russia supplies weapons, which is not true. What do servicemen of the National Guard do? They put a bag on a diabetic woman's head and strangle her, and when she asks for water they say, "We'll give you some urine".

It was so horrific that frankly speaking, I'm terrified even to think about it, just terrified. After that they took us to Iziium and handcuffed to some pull-up bar. We even slept handcuffed for three days and during all of that time the only food we got was a piece of bread. Then they took us to the SBU office in Kharkov and locked us up in a cell. The conditions there were more or less acceptable.'

Olga Seletskaya, civil society activist, says, 'Since March 2014, I have been actively participating in rallies held in Mariupol. I used to be a commandant of the tent camp located near the City Council. I was engaged in the preparation and holding of the referendum in Mariupol.

The Azov battalion officers arrested me in Mariupol. Immediately after that, I was hooded and taken to the Rechnoy village area for execution. I felt machine gun fire over my head. After that, they drove me to the Mariupol airport, where they tried to force me to give testimony by putting a plastic bag on my head that did not let any air get to me. They used a shocker on me and wanted to throw me into a pit filled with corpses. They threatened to harm my child and my family.

In the evening, I was taken to the Mangush – Mariupol checkpoint; the SBU investigators were invited to come there. They forced me to write an explanation, saying I was allegedly traveling from Berdyansk by bus and the National Guard soldiers made me get off due to carrying a bullet pack and a registration certificate of the collector car of the Privat bank. After that, I was taken to the SBU office and for three days counterintelligence, ATO headquarters and the SBU investigators have been working with me. Three weeks later, I was subjected to interrogation under torture. They put a dark bag on my head, tied my

hands and beat me on the legs and on the back with a heavy object. Sometimes they used a shocker. And when I lost consciousness they poured water on me.'

Victor Savin, a self-defense fighter, specifies the kinds of torture he was subjected to by Ukrainian security forces:

'They used to torture me in the following ways: 1) They back-handcuffed and hooded me, put me on my back, cover my mouth with a wet cloth and poured water on it. When I was choking, they turned me on my side and let the water come out, so I could breathe. This was repeated several times; 2) They knocked out my front teeth; 3) They hung me up by the arms on a pipe, forced me to open my mouth and stuffed it with a rag. Holding my with their hands, they began filing my teeth with a rasp-file; 4) They hung me on the pipe and tortured me with a shocker.'

Pyotr Khokhlov, another member of the self-defense forces captured by the Ukrainian army near the city of Lugansk, also talks about beatings and attempts to bury people alive in a pit.

'They captured us, took us to an airport and started interrogating and beating us up. Then I was brought to another room, put on a chair and somebody was shooting at me several times. After that, the only thing I remember is being asked my name, last name and patronymic and then it was all a blur.

Then they took us to Kramatorsk. They were beating us up there hitting on the soles of our feet. After that they dug a pit and started pushing us down there with a shovel. They wanted to bury us alive.'

Dmitry Nyryalko, another victim, tells about Galichina battalion soldiers burying him alive in a pit, simulating his execution and setting a bag on his head on fire.

'On 2 August 2014 the National Guard of Ukraine captured me wearing only a t-shirt, shorts and flip flops. They immediately put a bag on my head, handcuffed me and tied my legs with a band. They brought me somewhere, threw me into a pit and told me to pray. They were shooting right next to my ear setting the bag on my head on fire. I'm now hard of hearing in my left ear.

After that someone came for me. I'm not sure who they were, but I heard they belonged to the Right Sector. They put a bag on my head and took me to Slavyansk, where they threw me into a pit and tried to shoot me dead again. They said they belonged to the Galichina battalion. I had my passport with me and they tore it apart and threw it into the pit, then they threw me there too and started filling up the pit. They kept doing it until I was up to my neck in the ground, then their leader came up and ordered them to get me out. After that they took me to a temporary detention centre in Kharkov to exchange me later.'

Nicholay Arishin, who used to buy food for Donbass self-defense fighters was subjected to torture because of it. He tells how he was tortured with a shocker and how they made him sing the national anthem on his knees: 'Since mid-April 2014, I rendered assistance to self-defense forces – I bought products and fuels. I was arrested in my apartment early in the morning, probably 6 or 7 a.m. 5 or 6 people wearing masks and carrying automatic weapons participated in the arrest. They brought me to the Kramatorsk airport. For about two days they beat me up with different objects, such as hoses, pipes, shovels, tortured me with a stun gun. All the while, they forced to sing national anthem while kneeling. They did not interrogate me, just tortured, forced me to sing the national anthem on my knees, while kicking and hitting me on the legs and hands, on the back and the buttocks with bats. They cocked the gun and imitated shooting a few times.

Then they locked me in a very small room with no light. I had to urinate in a plastic bottle. I slept on a concrete floor. I complained about having kidney problems and said that I was not supposed to supercool. They immediately took off my jacket and my sweater. They threatened to arrest, torture and rape my wife if I did not give evidence.'

Sergey Evtishenkov, another Torture victim, speaks about being forced to sing the anthem of Ukraine on his knees: 'On 13 October 2014, I was at home. Then I came out to talk to a friend, who asked for my phone to make call. 20 minutes later, a car stopped near us and three people came out of it and arrested us. We were taken to the SBU office in Kramatorsk. Three of them hit me with a stun gun and working

tools: with a shovel handle and a metal pipe. They wanted me to sing the anthem of Ukraine on my knees. They took me out into the yard and made shots right above my head. Meanwhile they kept shouting that if I did not sign what they told me to, they would torture my family and relatives. I signed everything.'

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