Civil war spreads in eastern Ukraine amid attacks by Kiev government

Alex Lantier
6 May 2014

Bloody fighting engulfed the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine yesterday, as forces of the US puppet regime in Kiev assaulted cities held by armed, pro-Russian protesters.

Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency reported that miners at two Donetsk coal mines, South Donbass No. 1 and No. 3 mines in Ugledar, had gone on strike to protest Kiev's crackdown.

Clashes mounted in Slavyansk, an industrial city and center of the pro-Russian forces north of Donetsk city. Yesterday, the Kiev regime reported that four Ukrainian troops had been killed and 30 injured in clashes in the city, while pro-Russian self-defense forces said that they had suffered 3 dead, 10 missing, and 30 wounded. A 30-year-old civilian woman was shot and killed on her balcony.

Pro-Russian forces shot down a Mi-24 helicopter near the city and released the pilot to a Ukrainian military hospital, the Ukrainian defense ministry reported.

Ukrainian army troops also assaulted pro-Russian protesters holding the nearby town of Kramatorsk, leaving seven dead. According to Russian press reports, a unit of Berkut riot police refused orders from Kiev to march on Kramatorsk for a "mop-up operation."

In Donetsk, pro-Russian forces told RIA-Novosti yesterday that a shootout had erupted near the city council building with forces they believed to be from Right Sector.

In Kharkov, Ukrainian Railways announced that it was modifying the routes of 17 train lines to avoid Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, and Konstantinovka, and canceling all travel from Kharkov to the Lugansk and Donetsk regions by bus.

Ominously, the fascist forces leading the Kiev regime's crackdown are also trying to suppress all reporting from the region. In a post on Twitter, Right Sector put a $10,000 bounty on the head of *Russia Today* (RT) journalist Graham Phillips, a British citizen.

They also are threatening a cameraman working for RT in Odessa, according to a statement issued by RT Editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan. "Our cameraman-stringer in Odessa received a call from the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU). [They] said he is now on the radar of the Right Sector. Former colleagues gave him up. SBU said that the Right Sector now has all his phone numbers and addresses. They gave him up for his anti-Maidan views, which he never kept secret," she wrote.

On April 26, the heads of Russia's major TV corporations issued a statement protesting the treatment of journalists working for Russian news outlets in Ukraine.

East Ukraine is "witnessing the ruthless suppression of civil liberties on a daily basis," they wrote. "Journalists are being threatened with their lives if they continue to report from Ukraine ... The new Ukrainian authorities have repeatedly taken illegal actions barring our staff journalists covering the Ukraine crisis from performing their professional duties, and violating their human dignity."

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact