

URGENT ACTION

FATE OF CAPTURED UKRAINIAN OFFICER UNKNOWN

Ivan Bezyazykov was captured by pro-Russian separatist forces on 16 August 2014 in eastern Ukraine. They heavily beat and tortured him. His wife made contact with his captors on 2 October and has reason to believe his life might be in danger. Ivan Bezyazykov's whereabouts and fate are currently unknown.

Ukrainian military intelligence colonel **Ivan Bezyazykov**, 44, was captured together with two other male soldiers during ceasefire negotiations with pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine on 16 August 2014.

Ivan Bezyazykov had been ordered by his commanding officer to hoist a white flag and approach the other side to negotiate a temporary ceasefire. The objective of this ceasefire was to allow time to collect the bodies of the dead and to evacuate the injured following a two-day battle near the village of Stepanivka. The separatist fighters disarmed Ivan Bezyazykov and two other men who were accompanying him and took them prisoners. The two other men were released, one in September and the other in December 2014. They told Ivan Bezyazykov's wife, Margarita Kushnirova, that they had all been beaten and tortured and especially her husband. They told her that Ivan Bezyazykov had been subjected to several mock executions and suffered from broken ribs and swelling of the whole body.

Margarita Kushnirova was able to speak to Ivan Bezyazykov on the telephone on several occasions up until 22 May. After that she could only be in touch with his captors. One of Ivan Bezyazykov's captors, Eduard Basurin, told her on 2 October that her husband did not want to speak or see her, but if she wanted to see him she would have to go in person to Donetsk. Margarita Kushnirova has to take care of three small children and is concerned about her safety if she travels to Donetsk. She has not been allowed to talk to Ivan Bezyazykov again, and does not know whether his injuries are preventing him from talking to her or even if he is alive at all.

Please write immediately in Russian or your own language to the de facto authorities in Donetsk:

- Insisting that information regarding Ivan Bezyazykov's fate and whereabouts is provided immediately to his family;
- Urging that immediate steps are taken to ensure that neither Ivan Bezyazykov, nor any other prisoner in their custody, is subjected to torture or other ill-treatment, and ensure that they are immediately provided with the medical treatment they require;
- Reminding them that anyone held by either side in connection with an armed conflict is protected under international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and urge them to take effective lawful steps to prevent torture or ill-treatment of prisoners in their custody or in the custody of any forces under their effective control.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 DECEMBER 2015 TO:

Head of the DNR
Aleksandr Zakharchenko
str. Pushkinskaya 34
Donetsk, Ukraine
Email: op@dnr-sovet.su
Email: info_dvpadnr@mail.ru
Salutation: Dear Mr Zakharchenko

Copies to:
DNR Ombudsperson
Dariya Morozova
bul. Pushkina 34
et. 5, kab. 540
Donetsk, Ukraine
Fax: +380 95 656 80 70
Email: office@ombudsmandnr.org

And copies to:
Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner on Human Rights
Valeriya Lutkovska
21/8, Instytutska street
Kyiv 01008, Ukraine
Email: hotline@ombudsman.gov.ua

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The conflict in eastern Ukraine began in spring 2014, after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation. In April and May 2014, opponents of the new Kyiv government occupied buildings belonging to the local administrations and law enforcement agencies in several towns in the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions of eastern Ukraine (Donbass). Demanding increased local autonomy or independence from Ukraine (and closer ties with Russia), protest organizers formed armed groups, justifying their actions by raising concerns about the rights of the region's Russian-speaking residents. In Donetsk and Luhansk, and smaller towns in their vicinity over which armed groups took effective control, they proclaimed the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" (DNR) and the "Luhansk People's Republic" (LNR). In response, the authorities in Kyiv launched what they called a "counter terrorist operation" (antiteroristichna operatsiya, ATO) – a military operation aimed at retaking control of the area. The ensuing conflict resulted in over 8,000 deaths and nearly two million displaced people.

On 11 February 2015 following months of internationally mediated negotiations between representatives of the authorities in Kyiv and the de facto authorities in Donetsk and Luhansk, in Minsk, Belarus, the so-called "Minsk II" agreements were signed leading to a ceasefire. Although these have not been fully implemented, the intensity of the fighting in Donbass has significantly reduced.

The stories of torture and other ill-treatment of prisoners held by both sides in connection with the conflict in eastern Ukraine are not only shocking, they are all too common. Amnesty International interviewed 33 former prisoners in March and April 2015, 17 of whom had been held by separatists, and 16 by pro-Kyiv military and police forces. All but one of them described severe beatings or other serious abuse, particularly during the initial days of captivity. The report is available here: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/1683/2015/en/>

Ivan Bezyazykov is believed to have been subjected to torture because of his high military rank and because he belonged to the Ukrainian military intelligence (voennaya razvedka). The two other men captured together with him, who were released, describe how the three of them had been subjected to heavy beatings at each checkpoint they were taken through. They also explained that the treatment of Ivan Bezyazykov had been especially harsh and that he had been subjected to mock executions at least five times. His wife told Amnesty International that her husband had several of his ribs broken and could not talk properly for the first several months of his captivity as a result of the heavy beatings.

Name: Ivan Bezyazykov

Gender: m

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