

URGENT ACTION

ESTABLISH WHEREABOUTS OF DISAPPEARED MAN

Aleksandr Minchenok, a 31-year-old civilian man from Lisichansk, disappeared on 21 July after being “arrested” by pro-Kyiv forces while travelling with his grandmother in eastern Ukraine. His parents, who have not heard from him since July, fear for his life.

On the morning of 21 July **Aleksandr Minchenok** was traveling in his car with his grandmother Maria Naumova from Lisichansk, a town in Luhansk Region, to Kharkiv. He called his parents to tell them that they had passed the checkpoints controlled by pro-Russian separatist near Severodonetsk. After about 30 minutes, an unknown person who did not identify himself called Aleksandr Minchenok’s parents and told them that their son had been arrested and was being taken to the Prosecutor’s office. After this phone call, neither Aleksandr Minchenok nor the unknown caller could be reached again.

Ekaterina Naumova and Yuriy Naumov, Aleksandr Minchenok’s parents, rushed to their son’s last known location and found people who told them that their son had been apprehended by the territorial defence battalion Aidar, one of over thirty so-called volunteer battalions to have emerged as part of the pro-Kyiv forces in the wake of the conflict. Members of the pro-Kyiv forces present at the site told the parents that Aleksandr Minchenok had already been released near Starobelsk, a town a short distance from Luhansk.

Aleksandr Minchenok’s grandmother said that they had been stopped by men in military uniforms, but she could not remember what insignia they had. Aleksandr Minchenok’s parents told Amnesty International that their car, a Mitsubishi Pajero, was later seen on the streets of Starobelsk.

The mother also spoke with members of the pro-Russian separatist forces who told her that the territory where her son was arrested was controlled by pro-Kyiv forces from battalions Aidar, Luhansk-1 and Donbass.

Aleksander Minchenok is about 180 cm tall and has visible surgery scars on his shoulder and one of his shins.

Please write immediately in Ukrainian, Russian, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to immediately establish Aleksandr Minchenok’s fate and whereabouts and ensure his safety;
- If he is in detention, urge them to ensure his immediate access to a lawyer of his choice, and charge him with a recognizable criminal offence or immediately release him;
- Call on the authorities to promptly, impartially and effectively investigate the circumstances of Aleksandr Minchenok’s disappearance, stressing that under international law arrest or detention may only be carried out strictly in accordance with the law, by competent officials or persons authorized to exercise those powers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 JANUARY 2015 TO:

Minister of Internal Affairs
Arsen Avakov
Akademika Bogomoltsa Str. 10
01024 Kyiv
Ukraine
Fax: +380 44 253 9796
Email: mvsinfo@mvsinfo.gov.ua
Salutation: Dear Minister

Prosecutor General of Ukraine
Vitaliy Yarema
Vul. Riznytska 13/15
01601, Kyiv
Ukraine
Fax: +380 44 280 2603
Email: press-service@gp.gov.ua
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General

And copies to:
Commander of Aidar battalion
Sergiy Melnichuk
Grushevskogo St. 30/1
01021 Kyiv
Ukraine
Tel: +380 44 253 0471
Email: admou@mil.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

Territorial defence battalion Aidar is one of over thirty so-called volunteer battalions to have emerged in the wake of the conflict, which have been loosely integrated into Ukrainian security structures as they seek to retake separatist-held areas. There is a growing body of evidence indicating that members of Aidar, operating in the north of Luhansk Region, have been involved in abuses, including abductions, unlawful detention, ill-treatment, theft, extortion, and possible summary executions.

While formally operating under the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, members of Aidar battalion act with little if any effective oversight or control, and local police are reportedly unwilling or unable to address the abuses. Some of the abuses committed by members of Aidar may amount to war crimes, for which both the perpetrators and, possibly, the commanders would bear responsibility under national and international law.

Amnesty International raised concerns regarding abuses committed by members of Aidar battalion (see *Ukraine: Abuses and war crimes by the Aidar Volunteer Battalion in the north Luhansk region*, Index Number: EUR 50/040/2014 <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/040/2014/en>), including directly with its local commander for Severodonetsk and Rubizhne. In a meeting with Amnesty International he confirmed that the battalion used a "simplified" procedure for detentions and indicated that the battalion indeed had its own facility in the Severodonetsk area for holding detainees. He acknowledged that there could be instances of beating during arrest, confirmed that detainees were blindfolded throughout the detention, that mentioned a man who had been apprehended and held by men under his command, and then handed over to the police.

Police and military authorities in Severodonetsk informed Amnesty International that there are 38 criminal cases opened into actions allegedly committed by the members of Aidar battalion, mostly involving incidents of robbery. Reports on this spate of crimes were submitted up the line to the Ministries of Defence and Interior, without tangible result thus far. Local police told Amnesty International that they were well aware of the widespread criminal actions by members of Aidar but were unable to do anything beyond the registration of criminal cases.

A high ranking military official in the area informed Amnesty International that after receiving his reports, in early August the Ministry of Defence sent two inspections to Aidar battalion. Their recommendations to have the battalion re-organized, and strict regulations and procedures imposed, have yet to be acted upon.

Name: Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Minchenok
Gender m/f: m

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