

URGENT ACTION

SECOND MAN RELEASED, AT LEAST THREE REMAIN

Journalist Serhiy Shapoval was released on 18 May and has returned to his family. At least three hostages remain: theatre producer Pavlo Yurov, his colleague Denis Grishchuk and student Igor Oprya.

Serhiy Shapoval had been taken captive on 26 April after he tried to work undercover as a member of local armed group opposing the government in Kyiv. He was held for three weeks in a room that measured two metres by three, and fed intermittently. He sometimes went for a whole day without water, because his captors could not be bothered to walk down the corridor: "When I asked for water they swore at me. If it had lasted many hours more I would have thrown myself out of the window." He told Amnesty International that he had been beaten and tortured with electric shocks when first taken captive by members of armed self-defence forces and former Ukrainian riot police. He was released through the involvement of a Ukrainian politician and businessman, Viktor Medvedchuk, who told him that he was fortunate that he was at the top of a list of 16 captives.

As before we ask you to address the armed group that is holding the hostages in Slovyansk using the only contacts we have available for them. Please write immediately in Russian, English or your own language (ideally by using the Russian text below) to the following email addresses, from the official website of the "People's Republic of Donetsk" (<http://donetsk-gov.su>) and to the State Security Services of Ukraine:

English: I am writing to express my concern for the safety of Pavlo Yurov, Denis Grishchuk and Igor Oprya who are being held captive in Slovyansk, possibly with others. I insist that all the captives are released immediately and unconditionally. Wherever they are, their freedom as well as their mental and physical wellbeing must be assured.

Russian: Я хочу выразить озабоченность по поводу безопасности Павла Юрова, Дениса Грищука и Игоря Опри, которые в настоящее время содержатся в неволе в Славянске, как, возможно, и другие лица. Я настаиваю на немедленном освобождении всех захваченных лиц, без каких-либо условий. Где бы они ни находились, их свобода и их психическое и физическое благополучие должны быть полностью обеспечены.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 9 JULY 2014 TO:

Email: hunta.resist@gmail.com

Email: abvgdasm@gmail.com

And copies to:

Director
Valentyn Nalyvaichenko
Director,
Security Services of Ukraine

Vul. Volodymyrska 35
Kyiv
01034 Ukraine
Email: sbu_public@ssu.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. This is the second update of UA 123/14. Further information: <http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/022/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Following the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014, protesters in eastern (predominantly Russian-speaking) regions of Ukraine who refused to recognize the legitimacy of the interim authorities in Kyiv seized control of official buildings in the towns of Donetsk, Slovyansk, Kramatorsk, Mariupol and others. Armed anti-Kyiv protesters in the biggest regional city, Donetsk, proclaimed the establishment of the "People's Republic of Donetsk" on 7 April. Armed groups in other towns have followed suit.

Armed anti-Kyiv protesters in Slovyansk have been behind a string of abductions, including those of military observers despatched by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), who were later released after mediation by a Russian envoy. In a press conference on 23 April, the self-proclaimed "People's Mayor" of Slovyansk, Vyacheslav Ponomarev, said some of the detainees were being held as "bargaining chips" and he had no intention of letting them go. He accused the Kyiv government of detaining and torturing his "comrades". Some captives have already been released or exchanged.

Amnesty International spoke by telephone on 9 May with the spokesperson for Vyacheslav Ponomarev, the self-styled "People's Mayor" of Slovyansk. She claimed that the men being held were not hostages, but had been detained "on suspicion of espionage", and that it remained to be decided what measures were to be taken against them.

The authorities in Kyiv have used police and military forces in an attempt to regain control of Donetsk and other towns and cities in eastern Ukraine from the armed anti-Kyiv protesters. The fighting has continued, and has resulted in dozens of casualties and wounded on both sides. There are reports of people being held captive by both sides.

Amnesty International has expressed concern about the safety of the local population in eastern Ukraine, and has appealed to the interim authorities in Kyiv over incidents of unlawful deprivation of liberty and ill-treatment of captives by armed individuals who are evidently associated with the pro-Kyiv forces but are not competent officials or persons authorized to exercise those powers (<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/EUR50/020/2014/en>). There are also reports, including substantive video footage, of the use of firearms by Kyiv-controlled security officials against unarmed protesters resulting in casualties

Names: Pavlo Yurov, Denis Grishchuk, Igor Oprya
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 123/14 Index: EUR 50/025/2014 Issue Date: 28 May 2014

