



OPEN DIALOG FOUNDATION

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UKRAINE: ANTI-GOVERNMENT PROTESTERS ARRESTED EN MASSE ACROSS UKRAINE'S REGIONS

Mass anti-government protests have spread into most regions of Ukraine. In the south and east of the country, which traditionally have had a high level of support for the current government, protesters faced stern opposition from local authorities - the protesters are being dispersed by special police units, while those detained face criminal proceedings.

A characteristic feature of clashes between protesters and the law enforcement bodies was the participation of a third party: thousands of young men wearing masks on their faces and brandishing sticks were beating participants of anti-government protests. At the same time, law enforcement officials, despite the fact that they had seen these blatantly criminal acts, did not detain the attackers. Identical cases were reported in the cities of Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporozhye, Kirovograd, Kharkov, Nikolaev, Kherson and Odessa.

Dnepropetrovsk Province

On 26 January, 2014, an anti-government protest, attended by several thousand people was held near the Dnepropetrovsk Regional State Administration (RSA). During the protest, a group of those gathered was attacked by a group of unidentified masked men with sticks. Many of them were carrying non-lethal weapons and police shields. All attackers were wearing yellow armbands.

As the column of protesters passed by the fence of the building of the Regional State Administration, several dozen athletic looking persons wearing yellow armbands and armed with sticks, began to throw smoke bombs, fireworks, stones and sticks at the protesters, provoking them to react.

According to eyewitnesses, the police did not intervene in the conflict, and in some cases even covered up for the attackers. Multiple segments of video footage which captured the event, indicate that the attackers had previously been hiding in the building of the RSA, where they were given sticks and shields.^{1,2}

According to some reports, at least 80 people³ were injured, and about 10 people were taken to hospital in serious conditions following the clashes.⁴ At least four people were injured from non-lethal weapons⁵. 20-year-old **Yaroslav Sinita** was beaten by unknown persons near the city stadium as he was returning home. As a result of the attack, Yaroslav Sinita sustained an open head injury and concussion of the first degree. Moreover, two criminal cases have been initiated against Yaroslav (on charges of involvement in the riots, as well as preparation of a terrorist attack).⁶

After the beating of protesters by unidentified men, police began to detain participants of the anti-government protests. As stated by an MP from the 'UDAR' party, Sergey Kaplin, the police detained random passers-by and deliberately attacked journalists. "*There is a hunt for journalists. [Whenever]*

¹ <http://news.liga.net/news/politics/968252-v-dnepropetrovske-zaderzhany-37-chelovek-mvd.htm>

² <http://news.liga.net/video/politics/968200-dnepropetrovsk-titushki-ryadom-s-militsiy-pered-atakoy-na-maydan.htm>

³ <http://hvylya.org/news/exclusive/razgon-aktsii-protesta-v-dnepropetrovske-narodnoy-gvardiye-yanukovicha-80-postradavshih.html>

⁴ <http://www.litsa.com.ua/show/a/14114>

⁵ http://censor.net.ua/photo_news/268160/titushki-pod-prikrytiem-militsii-strelyayut-po-dnepropetrovskim-mitinguyuschim-est-pos-tradavshie-fotoreportaj

⁶ https://www.facebook.com/euromaidanbankovavictims/posts/642220299178033?stream_ref=1

Titushki (a new slang word⁷, representing a group of young athletic men involved in provocations and hooliganism - Ed.) see a man with a camera, they follow him and try to beat him. They attacked a journalist, but he managed to hide in a cafe. Titushki walk around the city in large groups and beat everyone who, in their opinion, resembles a EuroMaidan activist⁸, - the deputy stated. A good example is the story of Leonid Babin's detention. On 26 January, 2014, he accompanied his son to the shop on the street when unknown persons seized him, pushed into a paddy wagon and took him to an unknown destination. His son managed to escape and inform his mother of the incident. Despite the fact that Leonid hadn't participated in anti-government protests, he was accused of involvement in the riots (Article 294 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). A court sanctioned his detention for two months.⁹

As of 31 January, 2014, a total of at least 27 people, were arrested in Dnepropetrovsk and subsequently accused of involvement in the riots (Article 294 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine): Leonid Babin, Yegeny Balabay, Yevgeniy Bardachenko, Alexander Bereza, Yuriy Bezotosnyi, Vitaliy Vershinin, Vadim Garkusha, Valeriy Dubovtsev, Vladislav Kachenyuk, Valeriy Lapin, Alexander Melnik, Konstantin Orbiladze, Vitaliy Piddubnyi, Konstantin Pegarkov, Dmitriy Rybchenko, Yevgeniy Stepanenko, Leonid Stepanenko, Dmitriy Turenko, Oleg Tsyganov, Vitaliy Khlusov, Sergey Khmelevskiy, Mikhail Khrolenok, Vadim Shabanov, Andrey Shamatiyenko, Vladislav Shevchenko, Eduard Shevchenko, Vasiliy Yagubyan.^{10,11} Most of them shall be held for at least 2 months by court ruling.

During the events near the Dnepropetrovsk Regional State Administration, at least six journalists sustained injuries due to the actions of law-violators. Cameraman **Sergey Kochet** suffered spinal injuries as he was shot with a non-lethal weapon; cameraman **Daniil Petrimonov** suffered an arm injury. Journalist **Natalia Svetlova** sustained injuries and bruises as a result of blows with a stick. In addition, a camera of one of the journalist of the local 'Channel 34' was smashed. Athletic young men smashed a laptop of a journalist of the newspaper 'Vesti' ['News'], **Yaroslava Markina**. Also, in the building of the RSA, they threatened a journalist of the newspaper 'Uriadovyi Kurier' ['Governmental Courier'], Natalia **Belovitskaya**.¹²

Following Sunday's storming, the authorities of Dnepropetrovsk stepped up security of the RSA – a barbed wire fence was erected around the building.

On 30 January, 2014, unknown perpetrators attacked attorney Sergey Kulbich, a counsel representing participants of the storming of the Regional State Administration of 26 January, 2014. As Kulbich was heading towards his car, two men approached him and asked to produce his documents. Then, the attorney was hit on the head before being stabbed with a knife. Due to the wounds inflicted, Sergey Kulbich lost a lot of blood.¹³

Zaporozhye Province

On 26 January, 2014 a EuroMaidan rally was held near the Zaporozhye Regional State Administration. On the night of 27 January, security forces dispersed the EuroMaidan activists who planned to stay for the night near the building of the regional administration. According to eyewitnesses, the protesters were 'mopped up' from the square with shots from traumatic weapons and stun grenades. At least 100 people^{14,15} were injured as a result of actions undertaken by law enforcement agencies and

⁷ <http://ru.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D0%A2%D0%B8%D1%82%D1%83%D1%88%D0%BA%D0%B8>

⁸ <http://news.liga.net/news/politics/968244-v-dnepropetrovske-militsiya-brosaet-v-avtozaki-vsekh-podryad-udar.htm>

⁹ https://www.facebook.com/EvromaidanSOS/posts/365957976878551?stream_ref=1

¹⁰ http://legalaid.gov.ua/ua/?option=com_content&view=article&id=598

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/groups/480065782103476/permalink/480123248764396/>

¹² <http://24tv.ua/home/showSingleNews.do?u-zaporizhzhii-dnipropetrovsku-postrazhdali-zhurnalisti&objectId=402885>

¹³ <http://www.056.ua/news/465197>

¹⁴ <http://24tv.ua/home/showSingleNews.do?pid-chas-rozgonu-protestiv-v-zaporizhzhii-postrazhdalo-do-100-osib&objectId=402909>

unidentified athletic men, acting in concert with the police. Protesters mainly sustained injuries to eyes and limbs. All patients with typical injuries were taken to City Hospital No. 5 where police patrols were on duty, arresting activists.¹⁶

At the same time, Head of the Main Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MDMIA) of Zaporozhye Province, Vladimir Serbia stated that no conflict had taken place - people fled as soon as they saw the police. Some people were detained, but he was not aware of any victims of the incident.¹⁷

As a result of the dispersion, at least 47 activists were detained; the court sanctioned a preventive measure in the form of house arrest or commitment not to leave the town in relation to them (they were accused of 'the seizure of the state or public buildings' - Article 341 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). The list of detainees (as of 31 January, 2014) includes: **Alexander Alexandrov, Igor Artyushenko, Nikolay Afanasiyevsky, Denis Belkin, Alexander Belorogov, Denis Buynichenko, Bogdan Volkov, Pavel Guba, Nikolay Gurskyi, Vadim Gusev, Oleg Zheliznyak, Denis Zvarych, Sergey Kalita, Ivan Klimov, Pavel Kovtun, Maxim Kononenko, Yevgeniy Kuzmenko, Nikita Kulinich, Yevgeniy Lazebnyi, Alexander Lyakh, Nikolay Malynovskiy, Vasiliy Mezencov, Yevgeniy Momot, Yevgeniy Nevkipiliy, Alexander Nikolayenko, Roman Onats, Sergey Onopriyenko, Alexander Panin, Sergey Pantsakov, Vitaliy Podlobnikov, Vitaliy Poznokos, Oleg Polyatykin, Andrey Poliachenko, Sergey Royenko, Dmitriy Samsyka, Vitaliy Sinitovych, Yuriy Sirman, Maxim Slatin, Konstantin Sobko, Andrey Syvats, Alexander Tushov, Yevgeniy Udovychenko, Alexander Furman, Vladimir Chukhlomin, Sergey Chyrka, Ivan Shchepetov, Dmitriy Yachyn.**¹⁸

During the events in Zaporozhye, at least three journalists were injured. Those beaten include: photographer of the information agency 'Ukrinform', **Dmitriy Smolenko**, journalist, presenter and musician **Valentin Terletskiy**, and editor-in-chief of the newspaper 'Mechta' ['Dream'], **Yuriy Gudimenko**. In particular, Smolenko and Terletskii were hospitalised due to their injuries. A policeman broke Yuriy Gudimenko's finger with a truncheon. *"I was shooting the film until I was struck with a truncheon on my hand, in which I was holding an apparently unnecessary item - a press ID card. It looks like my hand is unhurt, only my finger is broken. Hospitals are overrun with beaten people"*,¹⁹ - Yuriy Gudimenko enunciated.

Cherkassy Province

On 23 January, 2014, about 2 thousand people participated in an anti-government protest near the building of the Cherkasy Regional State Administration. By the evening, the most radical protesters had stormed the building. In retaliation, the police used stun grenades, and sprayed water on protesters using a hose (at that time, the air temperature was approx. negative 10 degrees Celsius). Olga Galushko, who was participating in the protest, sustained a severe craniocerebral injury. According to eyewitnesses, a man in a police uniform threw a flowerpot out the window of the third floor of the administration building; the pot fell on the girl's head. She is currently in hospital and her health condition is serious.²⁰

At around midnight, participants of the anti-government protest managed to force their way into the RSA building. Soon, however, police reinforcements arrived (including 'Berkut' Special Forces) to disperse the protesters. Approx. a hundred people were arrested. Random passers-by were also detained.²¹ In total, approx. 110 people were arrested following the storming of the Cherkasy Regional

¹⁵ <http://news.liga.net/news/politics/970213-v-zaporozhe-sud-izbral-meru-presecheniya-dlya-32-zaderzhannykh-u-oga.htm>

¹⁶ <http://kontrakty.ua/article/72974>

¹⁷ <http://news.liga.net/video/politics/968326-v-zaporozhe-zhestko-razognali-maydan-bolee-90-ranenykh-video.htm>

¹⁸ <http://z-city.com.ua/Список-запорожцев-которых-задержали-и-осудили-после-Майдана-29.01.2014>

¹⁹ <http://www.unian.net/politics/876822-vo-vremya-razgona-zaporojskogo-maydana-postradali-minimum-troe-jurnalistov.html>

²⁰ <http://www.unian.ua/politics/876026-postrajdala-pid-chas-shturmu-cherkaskoji-oda-divchina-u-vajkomu-stani.html>

²¹ http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/news/2014/01/140126_cherkasy_detained_or.shtml?utm_source=BBC.ua&utm_medium=twitter

State Administration.²² As of 31 January, 2014, in relation to approx. 50 people a court appointed various preventive measures: from house arrest to pre-trial incarceration for 2 months. The list of those arrested include: **Vitaliy Antonenko, Yuriy Bondar, Yuriy Botnar, Viktor Bryshevskiy, Alexey Bubnov, Alexander Buka, Sergey Valchuk, Vitaliy Vechoryk, Yuriy Gordiychuk, Nikolay Goron, Pavel Greshchuk, Nikolay Dobrynskiy, Vadim Dronov, Sergey Dukhovskiy, Timur Yemelyanov, Alexander Zapechenko, Roman Zinczenko, Roman Zuboliy, Alexander Ilyashchenko, Yuriy Kalynchuk-Marczenko, Boris Kaminskiy, Sergey Kyrylyuk, Oleg Kovalenko, Vladislav Kompaniyets, Yaroslav Korgut, Sergey Korsun, Yuriy Krasnopolskiy, Roman Krosnenchuk, Yuriy Kupriyev, Roman Kurtiyev, Konstantin Lykholay, Andrey Malyuk, Vladimir Marchenko, Yuriy Mygal, Dmitriy Midyanyk, Ramir Nuruyev, Alexander Ovchynnykov, Vladislav Panchenko, Ilya Pesetskyi, Eduard Prys, Ruslan Pukhnyi, Yaroslav Samozvan, Vladimir Serdyuk, Roman Skrygin, Oleg Snigur, Vitaliy Sobashenko, Yevgeniy Sukhovenko, Nikolay Taranenko, Anastasiya Tokmakova, Maxim Tuchkov, Konstantin Usenko, Vladimir Khagay, Sergey Khadzhinov, Vitaliy Khvostenko, Igor Kholodnyi, Vladislav Chornobylskiy, Andrey Sheludko, Alexander Shulga, Vitaliy Shushar, Bogdan Yunusov, Pavel Yakymenko, Andrej Yarmolenko.** All the detainees were accused of ‘participation in mass disorders’ (Article 294 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine) or ‘seizure of state or public buildings’ (Article 341 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine).²³

Yelena Svantsitska, the mother of one of the detainees, Vladislav Kompaniyets (charged under Art. 294 and 341 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine), denies that her son could possibly have taken part in the storming of the regional administration building. Vladislav is an excellent student; he received a presidential scholarship at Minor Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and he is Class 2 disabled person. According to his mother, Vladislav was detained while he was merely walking near the administration building, which at that time had already been seized by protesters. In relation to V. Kompaniyets, the court decided to apply a preventive measure in the form of house arrest.²⁴

Also, one of the leaders of Automaidan, Sergey Khadzhinov, was arrested in Cherkassy. His car, along with seven other cars belonging to activists of Automaidan, had their windows smashed by ‘Berkut’ Special Forces. By court decision, Khadzhinov shall be held in custody for 2 months. He was charged under Article 341 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine (‘seizure of state or public buildings’).²⁵

Kirovograd Province

Anti-government protests were also held in Kirovograd. Several thousand people gathered on the square in front of the regional administration building for a few days. Major clashes were avoided.²⁶ At the same time, opposition activists claim that many protesters were beaten by unidentified athletic men, who were using hammers.²⁷

In connection with the ongoing mass protests, activists of the Kirovograd Maidan were called in to report for questioning; many of them were detained and arrested on charges of ‘hooliganism’ (Article 296 of the Criminal Code) or ‘disobeying police officer’s instruction’ (Article 185 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). In particular, as of 31 January, 2014, at least 10 activists were detained, namely: **Nikolay Grechukha, Sergey Gorbovskiy, Maxim Gutsalyuk, Igor Derkach, Vitaliy Yegorov, Svyatoslav Koval, Vitaliy Koval, Maxim Korynychuk, Alexander Ratushnyak, Igor Yakymenko.**

Poltava Province

²² <http://dzvin.org/cherkasy-u-sumnomu-rejtynhu-mist-z-najbilshoyu-kilkistyu-zatrymanyh-aktyvistiv/>

²³ http://legalaid.gov.ua/ua/?option=com_content&view=article&id=598

²⁴ http://www.bbc.co.uk/ukrainian/news/2014/01/140126_cherkasy_detained_or.shtml?utm_source=BBC.ua&utm_medium=twitter

²⁵ <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2014/01/27/7011447/>

²⁶ <http://www.pravda-kr.com.ua/golovna/906-kirovogradsku-oda-shturmom-ne-vzyati-khronika-podij.html>

²⁷ <http://uapress.info/uk/news/show/15031>

On 26 January, 2014, activists of the Kremenchug Euromaidan attempted to get into the building of the city council. In connection with this incident (as of 31 January, 2014), criminal proceedings were instituted against four activists of the All-Ukrainian Association 'Maidan', namely: **Vladimir Pylypenko, Sergey Polyukhovych, Igor Chadyuk and Leonid Kharchenko**. Each detainee was accused of making attempts to seize an administrative building (Article 341 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). On 28 January, 2014, the court decided to apply a preventive measure to the detainees: house arrest.²⁸

Sumy Province

During 23-24 January, 2014, several thousand people picketed near the building of the Sumy Regional State Administration, as well as near the building of the regional council. The protesters tried to prevent the adoption by the Regional Council of a statement in support of the actions undertaken by President Viktor Yanukovych. On 24 January, 2014, clashes broke out near the regional council.²⁹ Several people were arrested on charges of attempting to seize administrative buildings and block them (Article 341 of the Criminal Code of Ukraine). In total, at least 9 activists (as of 31 January, 2014) were detained in Sumy: **Georgiy Ignatiyev, Vladislav Midushevskiy, Alexander Revenko, Alexander Repetun, Yuriy Tkachenko, Alexander Tovstukha, Roman Churilov, Oleg Sharyi, Dmitriy Sheremet**.³⁰

The Open Dialog Foundation hereby addresses non-governmental human rights organisations, independent media outlets and international human rights institutions of the European Community, with an appeal to send observers to the regions of Ukraine in order to monitor the observance of human rights. In particular, the following actions are necessary:

- **the presence of international human rights defenders, diplomats and journalists at court hearings;**
- **participation in meetings with persons who are being remanded in custody or in hospital, victims and witnesses of the beatings and torture;**
- **participation in meetings with representatives of local authorities, prosecutor's offices and law enforcement agencies in order to investigate individual cases of oppression against activists and journalists.**

By means of intervention by human rights defenders and widespread publicity for the violations of law and incidents of torture exerted on detainees in recent weeks in Kiev, the altering of the preventive measure for participants of anti-government protests from arrest to house arrest has been achieved in many cases. Positive results gained from the practices outlined above suggest that consolidation of efforts will significantly reduce the possibility of innocent people being wrongly convicted.

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²⁸ <http://www.unian.ua/politics/877861-u-kremenchutsi-chotiroh-aktivistiv-maydanu-posadili-pid-domashniy-aresht.html>

²⁹ <http://news.liga.net/news/politics/969990-v-kirovograde-zaderzhany-20-aktivistov-maydana-svoboda.htm>

³⁰ <http://www.radiosvoboda.org/content/article/25242558.html>