

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/ukraine-ukrainian-and-russian-authorities-21-05-2014,46320.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Ukraine

Unlawful detentions

## Ukrainian and Russian authorities step up arrests of journalists

21 May 2014

The Ukrainian and Russian authorities carried out more arrests of journalists doing their jobs in the Donbass and Crimea regions between 16 and 19 May.

Two journalists from the Russian TV station *LifeNews*, **Oleg Sidyakin** and **Marat Saichenko**, [were arrested](#) by Ukrainian troops during an anti-terrorist operation near Kramatorsk airport on 18 May. At the same time, at least [six journalists](#) were detained and questioned, some roughly, by Russian security forces in Simferopol during demonstrations commemorating the 70th anniversary of the deportation of Tatars from Crimea ordered by Joseph Stalin.

*"It is intolerable that a journalist, whatever the editorial line or political orientation of organization they work for, should be deprived of their liberty because they are covering unauthorised events,"* said Lucie Morillon, Reporters Without Borders head of research.

*"Media coverage of any event, where it is legal or not, should not be equated with participation and should not be the cause of legal action against the journalists."*

*Inasmuch as Oleg Sidyakin and Marat Saichenko were only doing their work as journalists among the rebels, regardless of how they reported the event, we urge the Ukrainian authorities, in particular the SBU security service, to release the two journalists as soon as possible.*

*We also call on the Russian authorities to apply the [UN Human Rights Council resolution](#) on the need to protect journalists covering peaceful demonstrations, and to ensure it is respected by the police and self-defence militias in Crimea. In the current crisis between Russia and Ukraine, there can be no political solution unless freedom of information is respected, so that all voices in the debate can be heard."*

## Two Russian journalists arrested during an anti-terrorist operation by Ukrainian troops

Oleg Sidyakin, a reporter for the pro-government TV station *LifeNews*, and his cameraman Marat Saichenko, [were arrested](#) with a group of rebels whose activities they were filming and were [handed over](#) to the national security service for investigation into their presence with the rebels.

Viktoria Syumar, deputy secretary of the Ukrainian National Security Defence Council, [said](#) the following day that the two journalists "belonged to the terrorist group" and all legal procedures would be respected. She added that they were a clear example of the media assisting terrorists and "taking part in terrorist conspiracy, aiding terrorists, is not journalism".

On 20 May, she [announced](#) that anti-aircraft missiles had been found in the trunk of the car they were using, which confirmed their support for terrorist activities by the rebels.

The independent Russian journalist **Arkady Babchenko** [notes](#) that their presence in the rebels' car does not mean the two journalists were implicated in transporting or handling weapons. Since the clashes in Kiev's Maidan Square earlier this year, which were widely covered in the media, he has stressed that the work of journalists in covering rebel violence cannot be equated with support for terrorism.

## Six journalists arrested by Russian police and self-defence

## militias in Crimea

**Osman Pashaev**, a noted journalist and founder of the online TV station *CrimeanOpenCh*, and his Turkish cameraman **Dzhengiz Tizgin**, were [arrested](#) by self-defence militia while they were covering a demonstration in the Crimean capital, Simferopol. Pashaev said he was held for 10 hours without the presence of a lawyer and was subjected to questioning under psychological pressure. His equipment was seized.

The next day, a reporter for the independent Russian TV station *Dozhd*, **Pyotr Ruzavin**, [was questioned](#) by another self-defence militia while he was filming in the main square in Simferopol. He wiped his camera's memory card on their orders before being questioned and his personal details noted. His equipment was damaged.

Arrests were also carried out by Russian law enforcement officers. On 18 May, **Artur Moryakov** a reporter for the news platform *Real'nost'.com* was [detained](#) by the special forces of the Russian police for four hours. He was roughed up during questioning and suffered a dislocated shoulder. A day earlier, **Waclaw Radzivinovich**, a correspondent for the Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*, [was arrested](#) by the FSB security force in a Simferopol café and accused of not being the person he claimed to be, despite the fact that his documents were in order. Two other journalists who were with him were also arrested, the Crimea correspondent of the Kiev newspaper *Dien*, **Nikolai Semena**, and the photographer **Leniario Abibulayev**. The FSB released them after noting their personal details.

In view of the atmosphere of tension between the Tatar and Russian communities following Russia's annexation of the Crimea on 18 March, the Crimean Tatar Assembly, known as the Mejlis, was forced to call off its demonstration marking the anniversary of the 1944 deportation of Tatars ordered by Stalin, after the Crimean authorities banned all mass action until 6 June. One rally was authorised, on the outskirts of Simferopol, while the city centre was patrolled by police and self-defence militias.

From 15 May, the security forces had been [pressuring journalists](#) who had already arrived to cover the event, issuing threats and seizing and damaging equipment.

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