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26 June 2024

Journalists matter: the need to step up efforts to liberate Ukrainian journalists held in captivity by the Russian Federation

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Valentina GRIPPO and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Ukrainian journalists are increasingly targeted by the Russian invaders for their professional activities. Since the start of the full-scale war of aggression in February 2022, the Ukrainian non-profit Institute of Mass Information documented over 599 crimes committed by the Russian Federation against media and media workers. 81 media workers lost their lives: 10 were killed while reporting and 71 died from shelling, torture or while serving in the armed forces. At least 30 media professionals and journalists are unlawfully deprived of their liberty and held as civilian detainees in the Russian Federation, facing fabricated criminal charges, torture, and deprivation of basic rights. The whereabouts of several Ukrainian journalists remain unknown. Unfortunately, the number of victims among journalists is growing.

The Parliamentary Assembly should prepare a report which will raise awareness about the plight of Ukrainian journalists held in captivity in the Russian Federation. In 2023, the Council of Europe launched a five-year “Journalists Matter” Campaign for the Safety of Journalists from violence, threats, and harassment across Europe. This campaign could be used more extensively to highlight the situation of Ukrainian journalists illegally detained in the Russian Federation. The awareness-raising effort could be amplified through international and local journalists associations.

The report should also take stock of the existing Council of Europe instruments that could be helpful and explore the avenues for member States to increase political and diplomatic pressure on the Russian Federation to ensure the release and return of captured and illegally detained journalists to Ukraine. Such efforts could include actions through international organisations to which the Russian Federation is a member, including the UN and the OSCE. The potential involvement of the International Committee of Red Cross must also be examined.

This report should also nurture measures in respect of all Ukrainian civilian detainees facing a similar situation to ensure that they are not forgotten and return to their families and loved ones.

Signed (see overleaf)



Signed¹:

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
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