



Abduction of legally elected officials, civil servants and civilians in Ukraine

Brussels, 17 March 2022

Dear Commissioner Didier Reynders,
Dear Commissioner Janez Lenarčič,

While the most brutal invasion launched by Russia on Ukraine is still ongoing, new terrors by occupant forces are being enforced on innocent people.

On the 11th of March, in the middle of the day, the mayor of Melitopol Ivan Fedorov was abducted by the Russian forces, due to his refusal to cooperate with the enemy. On the 13th of March, only two days later, the mayor of the city of Dniprorudne, Yevhen Matviiv was also captured by the Russian troops.

There is no exact number of how many other legally elected Ukrainian officials might be tortured and held in imprisonment, but there is no doubt that the number of politically related abductions is going to grow. It is obvious, that Putin attempts to install pro-Russian replacements, due to the inability to reach any significant military goals. Allegedly, torture and physical abuse is being used on these civil servants to extract valuable strategic information.

Besides such high-ranking officials' abductions and high pressure on Ukraine's local authorities, innocent civilians are being kidnapped and held as hostages too. As of the 15th of March, an intensive care hospital in Mariupol was occupied. This exact war crime is happening just at this moment, as the Russian army is holding hostages as a "living shield".

Russian aggression is far more than a blatant violation of international law - it is direct state-sponsored terrorism, and it must be stopped at any cost.

Therefore, we encourage the European Commission together with the United Nations and other international organizations to take on a bigger role and jointly demand that all abducted civilians and political prisoners must be released immediately.

Sincerely,

MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:

Liudas Mažylis, EPP
Aušra Maldeikienė, EPP
Nathalie Loiseau, Renew
Witold Jan Waszczykowski, ECR
Radosław Sikorski, EPP
Miriam Lexmann, EPP
Beata Mazurek, ECR
Jiří Pospíšil, EPP
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Juozas Olekas, S&D
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Pierre Larrouturou, S&D
Anna Júlia Donáth, Renew
Katalin Cseh, Renew
Romana Tomc, EPP
Milan Zver, EPP