

# The West Suppresses Report on Ukraine's Suppression of Journalists

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Region: [Europe, Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

## *OSCE Squelches Ukrainian Commission on Human Rights Speaker*

*At a 21 September 2015 meeting of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe), which is run by the Western powers and which is the leading organization concerning security and cooperation in Europe, a courageous speech against Ukraine's imprisonment and killing of independent journalists was made by Alexey Tarasov, the Chairman of the All-Ukrainian Commission on Human Rights.*

*Nearly halfway through the prepared text of his intended 6-minute summary description of the main cases, his speech was terminated by the Chairperson. It was cut off at 2:31 in this video:*

However, in this video of it, the termination is at 2:38:

Here, then, is the complete printed text, as it was posted at [Fort Russ on September 22](#). I have additionally placed a mark at the point where Tarasov's speech was cut short:

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*Dear colleagues,*

*Please allow me to welcome this meeting.*

*Probably everyone knows that today's Ukraine is the most problematic European country in terms of human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

*Especially where it concerns the tragic situation with the freedom of speech and freedom of expression, the situation of access to information, limitation of journalists' activity and the mass media in general.*

*According to information by the Institute of Mass Media, since the beginning of 2015 in Ukraine, there has been recorded 224 violations of the rights of journalists. According to the Institute's reports, almost every day journalists in Ukraine are beaten or intimidated.*

*The worst thing is the continuation of journalists' murders. For example, last year the talented journalist Oles' Buzina was killed right near the entrance of his house. He was a consistent supporter of the Ukraine's unity, at the same time fundamentally opposing to the war in the Donbass, which contradicted the official doctrine. The suspects of the murder of*

Buzina were arrested. They are under investigation. Human rights defenders are very concerned with the political pressure on the investigation and law enforcement agencies. They are afraid that the real killers will escape punishment.

In Kiev this year, journalists Sergei Sukhobok and Margarita Valenko, were killed in Cherkassy region – Vasily Sergienko.

In Ukraine there is political pressure on opposition media, harassment, illegal criminal searches and arrests of journalists became a reality. There are varied forms of violence against dissent in the Ukrainian media.

State officials are trying to illegally shut the license of the popular opposition 112 TV channel and of [the metropolitan newspaper "Vesti"](#). There were a great number of provocations, criminal searches, etc. Ukrainian authorities are forcibly trying to substitute owners of the mass media. Employees of the Odessa opposition website "Timer" for "prevention" were summoned for questioning at the office of the Ukrainian security service (SBU). There were some searches in journalists' houses.

Ukrainian authorities always have standard charges on "separatism" with following arrests for those media professionals who are disagree with the state policy. The Chief Editor of the Internet newspaper "Vzapravdu" Artem Buzila, for the last five months has been imprisoned in Odessa on such fabricated accusations.

The Editor of the newspaper "Rabochiy class", Alexander Bondarchuk has been illegally jailed for the last six months in the Kiev prison. And I can continue this list. There are dozens of journalists who are jailed or are in the wanted list of the SBU for their opposition publications.

Also, I want to draw your attention to the problem with the freedom of expression and regulation of the rights of conscientious objectors (COs) in Ukraine. They are individuals who have claimed their right to refuse to take military service, who have special ideological and moral convictions. ...

**[CUT SHORT HERE BY CHAIRMAN]**

... This is a normal practice for the European countries to protect rights of conscientious objectors, but not for the Ukraine. Nowadays the position of Ukrainian COs, who are not members of any religious organization, violates the law of the country. Authorities criminally prosecute even those journalists who are COs.

A striking confirmation of this problem is the prosecution of journalist Ruslan Kotsaba, who is CO. For his public conscientious objection, Ruslan Kotsaba has been jailed and his case has been considered for several months by the Ivano-Frankivsk City Court. The authorities consider the open position of the honest journalist as "obstruction of the lawful activities of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and other military formations during the special period." Such behavior of the authorities is difficult to imagine in a normal democratic society. Now, according to the information of Ukrainian prosecutors thousands of COs have been prosecuted, and hundreds of them have been jailed. Therefore, in our country there is a total process of transformation of ideological Ukrainian COs into real prisoners of conscience.

*In addition, there is another issue. Between Ukraine and the European Union the Association Agreement was signed, which was simultaneously ratified in September 16, 2014 by the European Parliament and the Parliament of Ukraine. According to the Agreement, particular attention is paid to the observation of human rights. Article II (two) states: "Respect for democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms, as defined in particular in the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (1975) and the Charter of Paris for a New Europe (1990) ...".*

*This Agreement has not yet entered into force, and the Parliament of Ukraine on May 21, 2015 has adopted a resolution "On the withdrawal from certain obligations, certain International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms." This resolution also violates Helsinki Final Act obligations. Ukrainian Deputies motivated their decision to adopt the resolution by the tragic events in Donbass.*

*By the way, our Ukrainian Human Rights Commission issued a report "Undeclared war at the center of Europe". It concerns the observance of human rights during the so called «anti-terrorist operation» in Donbass by Ukraine's state officials. You can see and have it near the conference hall.*

*So, the Ukrainian state instead of focusing on the implementation of international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians during the armed conflict in Donbass, has substituted these concepts and instead withdrew itself from the obligations of the state to respect international human rights, to protect them, and the exercising of rights of millions of inhabitants of Donetsk and Lugansk regions.*

*By the adoption of such a decision, the Ukrainian state has applied to a part of its citizens discriminatory measures based on their residence, and has restricted their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including their right to liberty and security, freedom of residence and movement, the right to fair trial and effective means of legal protection, social protection etc.*

*There is a question to the EU countries, who ratified the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU, the main elements of which are based on international and European standards of human rights without any exceptions:*

*Will these countries suspend the entry into force of the Association Agreement between Ukraine and the EU before the termination of the violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of millions of citizens in Ukraine? Or will they want to support Ukraine's position of double standards, and not to extend the requirements of this Agreement to particular regions of Donetsk and Lugansk?*

*We hope that the international community will stop the ignorance of massive and systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Ukraine, first of all, in matters of freedom of speech and the rights of journalists, and will put pressure on the Ukrainian authorities in order to force them into complying with their international obligations in the field of human rights.*

*Investigative historian **Eric Zuesse** is the author, most recently, of [They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010](#), and of [CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity](#).*

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Investigative historian Eric Zuesse is the author, most recently, of *They're Not Even Close: The Democratic vs. Republican Economic Records, 1910-2010*, and of *CHRIST'S VENTRILOQUISTS: The Event that Created Christianity*.

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