

Reporters Without Borders

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Europe/Ex-USSR - Ukraine

Violent crackdown

Widespread violence against journalists during Kiev protests

2 December 2013

Reporters Without Borders is appalled by the scale of the violence against journalists during the pro-European demonstrations in Kiev. At least 45 journalists have been injured in clashes between demonstrators and police since 29 November. Most of the violence against journalists was deliberate.

"The frequency and gravity of the attacks on journalists indicate a deliberate desire to crush freedom of information," Reporters Without Borders said. "It is unacceptable that the media have again been the victims of the political unrest they were trying to cover as part of their professional duties.

"The police in particular have been guilty of targeted and disproportionate violence in blatant disregard for their obligation to protect the media. We urge the competent authorities to order the necessary investigations and to punish those responsible for the violence."

According to the information obtained by Reporters Without Borders, at least eight journalists covering demonstrations in Kiev in the past few days have been hit by stun grenades or teargas canisters, with serious consequences for their health in some cases, including that of *LB.ua* journalist **Max Levin**.

Twenty-six others, including *Zhitomir.info* photographer **Mikhail Zagorski** and *Euronews* cameraman **Roman Kupryanov**, have been beaten by members of the police and the special forces who knew they were journalists.

Five others, including *Gromadskoye Telebachennya* reporters **Dmitry Gnap** and **Yakov Lyubchich**, were targeted by demonstrators or unidentified individuals in civilian dress. Several had to be hospitalized. The 45 journalists who have been the victims of violence include eight foreigners. [See the complete list](#) compiled by Ukraine-based Institute for Mass Information (IMI).

Sparked by President Viktor Yanukovich's decision to suspend partnership negotiations with the European Union, the protests have swelled into a major anti-government movement on a scale not seen since the 2004 Orange Revolution.

Ukraine is ranked 126th out of 179 countries in the 2013 Reporters Without Borders press freedom index.

(Photo: Sergei Supinsky / AFP)

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