Reporters Without Borders

Europe/Ex-USSR - Ukraine

Sad news

Missing Russian photojournalist found dead in eastern Ukraine

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The experienced Russian war photographer Andrei Stenin, missing since 5 August, has been found dead in eastern Ukraine. DNA analysis confirmed that a body discovered in the Donetsk region late last month was that of the photojournalist, who had been killed by mortar fire.

Stenin was the sixth media worker to have been killed while covering the conflict in eastern Ukraine. The Russian Investigative Committee announced today that remains found a week ago were those of the photographer, who had been working for the news agency *Rossiya Segodnya*. The body was found by rebels of the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Donetsk near the city of Snizhne in a burned-out car of the type he drove.

Rossiya Segodnya, formed in 2013 from the merger of several state-owned news outlets, reported on 5 August that Stenin was missing. He had been in Ukraine since mid-May. Ukrainian authorities, accused of being behind his disappearance, issued several denials that they were holding him. A major online campaign was launched on Russian social media in his support.

"We are deeply saddened by the news of the death of Andrei Stenin," said Christophe Deloire, secretary general of Reporters Without Borders. *"It is further evidence of the highly precarious conditions in which journalists work in eastern Ukraine. We urge the Ukrainian and Russian authorities, and the separatist forces, to carry out full and impartial investigations to determine the exact circumstances surrounding the deaths of Andrei Stenin and the other journalists killed in the conflict. We note that, under international law, it is incumbent upon warring parties to do all they can to protect those who work in the media, as well as other civilians."*

News providers have paid a heavy price in the fighting between the Kiev authorities and anti-government forces since April this year. An Italian photographer and his local fixer and interpreter died in May and three Russian journalists were killed by mortar fire in June.

More than 200 people working in the media have been injured or attacked since the start of the year. As the fighting has intensified, kidnappings and arbitrary arrests of journalists have become more frequent in recent weeks. At least six journalists are currently detained by separatist groups, mainly in the Lugansk region.

Besides its regular press releases on the subject, follow RWB's news feed on press freedom violations in Ukraine.

(Photos: RIA Novosti,ITAR-TASS / Mikhail Pochuev)

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