

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/ukraine-summary-of-attacks-on-media-12-05-2014,46265.html>

Europe/Ex-USSR - Ukraine

News feed

Summary of attacks on media

15 May 2014

Reporters Without Borders is starting a Ukraine news feed in order to summarize the violations of freedom of information constantly taking place in Ukraine.

15.05.2014 - TV towers in east – targets and weapons of war

Ukraine's interior ministry [announced](#) on 15 May that national armed forces control the broadcasting tower at Kramatorsk (which is 12 km south of Sloviansk, one of the rebel strongholds in the Donetsk region) and denied a local news site's [claim](#) that anti-Kiev militiamen seized the tower on 14 May, when retransmission of all TV stations was interrupted.

Ukrainian special forces did however [regain control](#) of the television tower at Sloviansk on 14 May. It had been controlled for some time by anti-Kiev rebels, who had interrupted the broadcasting of Ukrainian programmes and replaced them by Russian TV stations.

Control of the region's main broadcast retransmission centres switches between the Ukrainian army and rebel forces in accordance with the success of their operations, resulting in frequent cuts and alternation between Russian and Ukrainian stations. Aside from their strategic importance in the information war, these centres allow the warring parties to mark their territory and project their authority over the local population.

13.05.2014 - Journalist freed after two weeks as hostage in Sloviansk

Reporters Without Borders is very relieved to learn that **Yuri Leliavski**, a reporter for the Ukrainian TV station *ZIK*, was released after being held hostage by pro-Russian militiamen for two weeks in Sloviansk, the stronghold of the pro-Russian rebels. Leliavski [revealed](#) at a news conference in the western city of Lviv on the evening of 12 May that he was freed on 9 May.

Militiamen [arrested](#) Leliavski barely an hour after he arrived in Sloviansk on 25 April, as soon as they realized he was from Lviv. He spent the entire two weeks in the basement of the building of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), now the headquarters of the pro-Russian militias.

12.05.2014 - Kidnapped journalist released

Reporters Without Borders is very relieved to learn that **Pavel Kanygin**, a reporter for the independent Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta*, was [freed](#) on the afternoon of 12 May after being [kidnapped](#) the previous night in Artemisk, in the Donetsk region. He had managed to send an SMS alert to colleagues during the night but thereafter remained unreachable until his release.

Pro-Russian rebels of the "People's Republic of Donetsk" had [confirmed](#) that they were holding Kanygin for spreading "negative" information and for not being accredited with them. In his coverage of the 11 May referendum on self-determination in the Donetsk region for his newspaper and on social networks, Kanygin reported a failure to respect electoral procedures. [He said](#) he was hit while being interrogated.

12.05.2014 - Journalist attacked in Kotovsk

Alexander Yaroshenko, a journalist who uses the pen-name of Sergei Levitanenko, was

[attacked](#) in his home in Kotovsk, near Odessa, on the night of 11 May by masked intruders in camouflage dress, who hit him and throttled him, accusing him of "not liking Putin."

After escaping, Yaroshenko described the attack as a "[murder attempt.](#)" When he subsequently returned to his home, he found that the room containing his work material had been torched. An investigation is under way.

12.05.2014 - Russia Today employee injured

The security situation for journalists is worsening steadily in the east of the country amid an increase in Ukrainian army operations and the emergence of more and more militias. An employee of the Russian TV station *Russia Today* sustained [a gunshot injury](#) during street fighting in Mariupol on 9 May. *Russia Today* said [he was evacuated](#) to Moscow on 12 May in a serious condition.

08.05.2014 - TV crew held for several hours

A crew with the Ukrainian national TV station *ICTV* were [held](#) by pro-Russian rebels at a checkpoint near Slovianks on 8 May. They considered themselves lucky to be freed after being interrogated and threatened for several hours, and stripped of their equipment.

08.05.2014 - Airwaves war

A cable TV supplier was [forced to drop all the Ukrainian national TV channels](#) on 8 May at the behest of Valeri Bolotov, the self-proclaimed governor of Lugansk and commander of the pro-Russian "army of the southeast," who threatened to terminate its entire service if it did not comply.

After being threatened physically, the cable operator's employees told clients they had been temporarily forced to drop the Ukrainian channels but pointed out that these channels could still be viewed on its website. After [the fight for control of TV retransmission centres](#), this marks a new phase in the airwaves war being waged by the parties to the conflict in eastern Ukraine.
