

Council of Europe
The Secretary General

Strasbourg, 13 May 2016

Dear President,

I am writing to express my concern over the publication on a Ukrainian website of the personal details of thousands of journalists who have reported from eastern Ukraine. This case was brought to my attention by prominent European journalist associations and freedom of expression organisations that have collectively submitted an alert to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists, of which they are partners. A copy of their alert is attached.

Publishing sensitive personal data puts the personal safety of these journalists at risk and I understand that some have already reported receiving threats. It is particularly worrying that this action has received praise from certain politicians, including members of Ukraine's Parliament.

This massive release of personal data on journalists raises serious questions under the European Convention on Human Rights and the data protection standards of the Council of Europe, as enshrined in the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to the Automatic Processing of Personal Data, which has been ratified by Ukraine, as well as the Resolutions and Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

I note, in addition, the call of the Ukrainian Ombudsman to block access to these resources, based on the fact that the collection and publication of sensitive personal data would also be in breach of the Ukrainian privacy laws.

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Mr Petro Poroshenko
President
Ukraine

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Against this background I call upon you, Mr President, as the guarantor of the observance of the Constitution of Ukraine and of human rights and freedoms, to ensure that the privacy and safety of the journalists is guaranteed and that the relevant authorities swiftly investigate and address this massive breach of privacy.

I should also like to avail of this occasion to express my expectation that co-operation between the Verkhovna Rada and the Council of Europe on data protection will rapidly reach concrete results and that the necessary legislative steps will be taken soon to safeguard the safety of journalists, the protection of personal data, freedom of expression and information, and strengthening the institution of the Ombudsman in these areas.

Yours sincerely,



Thorbjørn Jagland

Personal Details of Thousands of Journalists Posted on Ukrainian Website over Accreditation with Rebels

Date of entry : 12 May 2016

Country : Ukraine

Category : E. Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom

Source of threat : Non-state

Submitted by : EFJ/IFJ , Index , IPI


Alert level : Level 2

A Ukrainian organisation called the “Research centre of elements of crimes against national security (Myrotvorets)” has published on its website thousands of personal details of journalists who it claims have accreditation with rebels movements in the east of the country. The details include names, employers, emails addresses and mobiles phone numbers of over 4000 journalists, including 36 Ukrainians and foreign. The publication of this data has been condemned by Ukrainian journalists who consider this as an attempt to intimidate journalists from seeking access to rebel-held areas in Ukraine for fear of being accused of treason or facing mob violence in the country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- [Statement from CPJ: "Hackers, lawmaker put reporters at risk in Ukraine"](#)
- [Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Ukraine/Україна: Website leaks personal information of more than 4,000 journalists "](#)
- [Article published on the website detector.media](#)

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