

Interview with Bahanets, Deputy Prosecutor General Espresso TV, 26 April 2014

At the time of interview, 26 April 2014, Bahanets acted as Deputy Prosecutor General and Head of the Main Investigative Department of the GPO.

The main points of the interview, relating to the investigation of Maydan events, are as follows.

In the course of the interview Bahanets mentions that there are 28 proceedings with the GPO against investigators and other officials of MOI who falsified cases against the protestors.

Bahanets was asked whether he was satisfied with the investigations of mass killings on Maydan and who carried out the shootings of the victims referred to as Heaven's Hundred. Bahanets replies that he cannot be satisfied and gives the reasons of why no decision had been taken by the prosecution by that date. He mentions that to the extent that it was possible a strong and competent group of investigators have been formed and that the investigations were actively conducted. However, there were numerous objective reasons which hindered the investigations. In his opinion, in order to investigate successfully the crime of murder, it is necessary to timely examine the place of crime, collect any tracks, material evidence, order in time forensic medical examination. In cases investigated by PGO no investigative acts were carried out – no record of examination of the place of crime, no records confirming recovery or collecting of material evidence (castings, bullets, clothes of victims). Another problem was that all victims, most of them killed, were not found at the place where the crime had been committed but elsewhere – in an ambulance car, in morgue or in Trade Union Building. Almost none of the victims was found at the place of the crime. This complicates collecting of necessary evidence which would eventually allow to reconstruct the situation under which the fatal injuries were inflicted.

He further mentions that Berkut units that came to Kyiv from regions – Crimea, Sebastopol, Donbas, Luhansk – during the mass demonstrations, arrived unarmed. In order to find out which of the units/officers were armed with firearms, the evidence had to be looked for in units of firearms supply in MOI Kyiv departments. They, he says, did everything in time –ordered inventarisation, carried out inspection, looked for cards pertaining to each specific firearm which could have been issued to the persons involved by police. During this time the internal investigation was taking place and it lasted too long. Bahanest said that from the very beginning he criticized MOI for taking so much time. However, after he heard MOI's reports before the PGO about this internal investigation, he understood that the investigations were very complex. Thousands of people needed to be checked.

As for the date of the interview the internal investigations were completed, although, Bahanets mentions, that they were not quite satisfied with it. Bahanets mentions that it allowed them to carry out certain covert investigative search actions and narrow down the list of persons who used automatic firearms on Maydan. He further states that he does not mean snipers in this respect and he does not want to talk about snipers since almost all of them were identified. However, at the moment of interview the investigators did not have any casting or bullet from a sniper weapon. Inventarisation of weapons in the department of State Security, special SSU unit Alfa, special MOI unit Sokil and internal troops did not allow to state that any of the weapons were used during Maydan demonstrations. On the other hand, Bahanest continues, they had correctly identified special Berkut unit (its location and members) that was provided with firearms and used it. The work has not been completed though. Bahanets says he is surprised to hear complaints from former law enforcement officials about failure to solve these crimes – 70 murders and 700 injuries - within a month and a half. It has to be understood that people that received firearms injuries on Maydan did not stay there, they left for different regions in Ukraine

and they had to look for them throughout the whole county. It is a large amount of work in which only 28 investigators in specially important cases are involved.

Bahanets was further asked about snipers – were those Ukrainian officials, foreigners or simply bandits?

Bahanets answered that at the moment none of the mentioned versions were discarded. It has been accurately established that during shootings on Maydan representatives of the Russian special services were present on the territory of Ukraine. The investigation was clarifying whether those representatives were involved in use of firearms against the protesters.

In addition, Bahanets says, that they have solved the murder of Veremiy and established the persons involved. Those were at least five or six persons. Furthermore, they knew who ordered ‘titushky’. Those were not just ‘titushky’, those were members of criminal groups, including from Donetsk Region, consisting of Ukrainians and ethnic Russians. Law enforcement officials were involved in activity of these groups and engaging them in Maydan events. In Veremiy case at that point they were preparing to put people on wanted list and to put under pre-trial detention another three persons which they believed to be organizers of mass disturbances in Donetsk and Luhansk regions and possibly in other southern regions. They were financed in order to destabilize the situation in Ukraine.

Bahanets underlined that the investigations into shootings and injuries of people on Maydan in February 2014 was pending and was at an active stage. However, he believes that MOI will not be interested in solving the case of mass killings on Maydan because law enforcement officials will be brought to responsibility. MOI is more willing to work on the case of killings of 13 police officers and injuries of several hundred of police officers taking part in suppressing Maydan demonstrations. Plus, persons that have not been identified at this moment could have participated in shooting on Maydan, persons belong to ‘titushky’ or former law enforcement officials. Based on confirmed information he had received from acting PG Makhnitskiy, Bahanets states that other law enforcement officials could participated in the shootings too, as well as in abduction and beatings of protesters or members of the parliament. At the moment, according to Bahanets, the investigations were not concentrated on one specific episode or fact, one time frame. They had to take into consideration all the possible versions to understand the whole picture. There also exists a version (based on the official testimony of the law enforcement officials) that there were snipers on Maydan that targeted both law enforcement officials and the protesters. They could not exclude such version but time was needed for the situation to be clarified.