

Ukraine's position on the alert No. 201/2021
«Kyiv Post Journalists Fired Collectively» of November 22, 2021

A statement made to the Platform informs about a possible violation of the rights of journalists working for Kyiv Post, by the owner of this media outlet, Adnan Kivan, due to alleged pressure from the state.

In particular it is pointed out that Mr. Kivan fired all of its staff without prior notice, however afterward offered to rehire around 50 journalists, but under a new management. According to the given information, three weeks before the move, Mr. Kivan had announced his intent to reorganize the newspaper and develop a version in three other languages, and named an editor to head the new Ukrainian edition. The staff understood this as a threat to editorial independence and expressed opposition to Mr. Kivan's decision.

Except that it is said that Adnan Kivan allegedly expressed dissatisfaction with recent articles critical of the government, especially a front-page story about President Zelensky's offshore accounts. However, there is no evidence that representatives of state authorities put pressure on the Kyiv Post newspaper or on its owner. Mr. Kivan and a spokesman for the President of Ukraine deny pressure from the President's Office on the owner of the media outlet and the newspaper itself. Brian Bonner, who worked as chief editor of this newspaper, in his comment to the Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty also stated that Mr. Kivan denied pressure from the President's Office in their conversations.

In connection with the above-mentioned the Government of Ukraine:

- 1) Underlines that Kyiv Post is a private media outlet. Thus, the state cannot influence on relations between the staff of the newspaper and its owner as well as on decisions of the latter.
- 2) States that journalists did not submit any application to the law enforcement bodies in connection with the described events and that there are no criminal proceedings, registered in the Unified Register of Pre-trial Investigations, in regards of such incident.
- 3) Emphasizes that there are no proofs that Mr. Kivan expressed dissatisfaction with Kyiv Post's articles critical of the government. Information about the alleged dissatisfaction with editorial policy of the media outlet or journalists' publications disseminates in the open sources in the form of assumptions or guesses of journalists.

4) Points out that Kyiv Post was reopened at the beginning of December 2021. It is possible to get acquainted with the content of publications following the link: <https://www.kyivpost.com/> . There are no complaints from the public, the journalistic community and international partners about the staff's failure to comply with journalistic standards.

5) States that Luc Chénie - an experienced media professional with an impeccable reputation who had already worked as a Director General of Kyiv Post during 2016-2018, once again became a Director General of this newspaper.

Thus, the Government considers that there has been a private law conflict between the owner of the media outlet and its staff, on resolution of which the state cannot influence. Taking into consideration reopening of the media outlet, appointment of the new Director General with an appropriate experience and impeccable reputation as well as lack of complaints on the quality of journalistic materials, the Government considers that there are no risks for freedom of expression and asks to declare this case to be "resolved".