

Ukraine's Police Search for Missing Journalist

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KIEV — Ukraine's interior minister said Thursday that investigators would make every effort to find a missing journalist who wrote about corruption in law enforcement structures.

Vasyl Klymentyev, editor of the weekly newspaper Novy Stil (New Style) in Ukraine's eastern city of Kharkiv, has been missing for more than a week. He was last seen leaving his home Aug. 11 with an unknown man in a BMW. He has not been heard from since.

His deputy, Petro Matviyenko, said Klymentyev had been threatened after refusing to take money to kill a story about a regional prosecutor accused of accepting bribes to close criminal cases.

Matviyenko said pressure on journalists has increased since Viktor Yanukovich was elected president early this year.

International rights groups have expressed concern about a deterioration of media freedom in Ukraine, pointing to journalists' complaints about state-sponsored censorship, official

pressure and physical attacks.

The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists issued a statement Wednesday saying it was concerned about Klymentyev's well-being and urging Kharkiv authorities to carry out a thorough investigation.

"Given that Klymentyev's newspaper was known for its critical coverage of authorities, we urge investigators to focus on his journalism as a motive," said Nina Ognianova, the group's Europe and Central Asia program coordinator.

Interior Minister Anatoly Mogiliov said Thursday that he was taking the case under his personal control.

In 2000, opposition journalist Heorhiy Gongadze, who wrote about corruption among Ukraine's political elite, went missing for months before his decapitated body was found outside Kiev.

The killing sparked months of protests against then-President Leonid Kuchma, who was accused of involvement in the journalist's death.

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