MK Editor: 150 Journalists Attacked This Year

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More than 150 journalists nationwide have been beaten, maimed or threatened this year, with perpetrators remaining unpunished in most cases, a prominent publisher said Wednesday.

Police are reluctant to protect journalists, which is "a dangerous tendency," Pavel Gusev, head of the widely read Moskovsky Komsomolets daily, said at a session of the Public Chamber, of which he is a member, RIA-Novosti reported.

"It's dangerous to be a reporter or a photo correspondent in the 21st century. ... [It's] dangerous to write about corruption, to speak out freely," said Gusev, who heads the chamber's media committee.

Gusev did not provide sources for his figures, which range far above estimates by local and international rights groups. Last year, three reporters were killed and five beaten in Russia, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported earlier this year.

Still, Russia ranked "not free" in the latest Freedom of the Press global rating by the Freedom

House rights watchdog, released in May.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin made a token move to recognize the problem earlier this week, when he handed out state awards to several opposition journalists, including Mikhail Beketov, a Moscow region–based journalist who became disabled after a street attack that his supporters link to his criticism of local authorities.

The attack on Beketov remains unsolved, same as that of Kommersant reporter Oleg Kashin, who was beaten outside his Moscow apartment last November. On Wednesday, the Investigative Committee announced "progress" in the case, without elaborating, but Kashin dismissed it as "an illusion," Interfax reported.

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