Ukraine Confirms Abducted Journalist Free in Syria

By [The Moscow Times](#)

March 11, 2013

KIEV — Ukraine's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday confirmed that a Ukrainian journalist who was abducted in Syria is free after more than 150 days in captivity.

Ministry spokesman Yevhen Perebiynis said the reporter, Ankhar Kochneva, was expected to contact the Ukrainian Embassy in Damascus later in the day.

Kochneva, who has written for Syrian and Russian newspapers, was kidnapped in western Syria on Oct. 9 and reportedly held by members of the Free Syrian Army opposition group. Perebiynis said he had no further information on her.

Komsomolskaya Pravda quoted Kochneva as saying she walked away from the house where she was held, skirted a rebel guard post and then walked about 15 kilometers through fields until finding a villager who helped her.

According to the daily, Kochneva said she was abducted near the city of Homs while riding in a taxi to Damascus.

The abductors released a video in which Kochneva said she was working as a Russian agent, but the newspaper quoted her as saying the recording was made under duress.

"They forced me to say that I came to Syria on the instruction of Russian spies. They forced me with threats. I refused at first, but they said 'then we'll kill you,'" she said.

Komsomolskaya Pravda characterized Kochneva's reporting as showing "uncompromising support for Bashar Assad and the Syrian army."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2013/03/11/ukraine-confirms-abducted-journalist-free-in-syria-a222
69