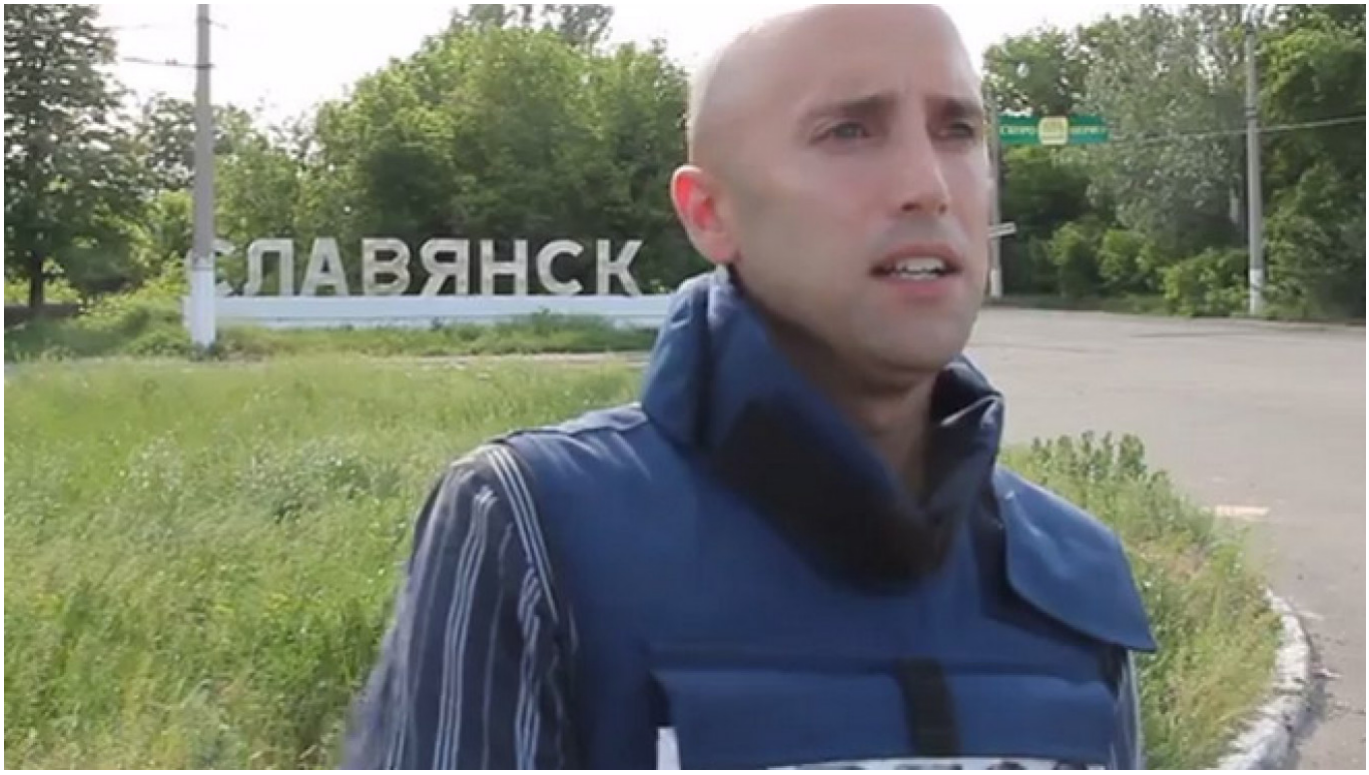
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

British Journalist Says Detained by Ukrainian Troops

By Jennifer Monaghan

May 21, 2014



British freelance journalist Graham Phillips has said that he has been detained by Ukrainian troops.

A British freelance journalist who contributes stories to Russian state-run news outlet RT has said that he has been detained in southeast Ukraine, a news report said.

Graham Phillips told RT, formerly Russia Today, that the Ukrainian National Guard stopped him at a checkpoint near the port city of Mariupol on Tuesday.

The guards said they would release Phillips if he agreed to delete footage that he had taken and hand over items of protective clothing, RT reported, citing an unidentified source.

When he refused to cooperate, Ukrainian Security Services officers arrived and confiscated his recording equipment before sending him to Kiev, the report added.

RT said it has been unable to contact Phillips since he called the news agency about two hours after his supposed detention.

Last week Phillips posted a series of messages on Twitter, claiming he had been shot at by Ukrainian soldiers outside the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk.

RT later published a story about the incident, saying that Phillips had not been shot at, but had actually set off a tripwire flare, a version of events that Phillips denied.

Phillips has gained a reputation among some pro-Ukrainian supporters as being a Kremlin mouthpiece.

Two weeks ago a member of the Ukrainian ultranationalist Right Sector group offered $10,000 for the capture of Phillips, accusing him of being a Russian spy, RT reported.

On Tuesday a social-media user posted a message on the Facebook page of Euromaidan Kharkiv, a pro-Kiev group, saying that Phillip's reporting was biased and asking for him to be deported.

RT also seems keen to distance itself from Phillips. Last week's report about the tripwire said that Phillips was "RT's freelance reporter," while one of the reports about his detention referred to him as a "contributor" with "no connection with RT."

The U.K. Foreign Office said that it was looking into Phillip's detention and was ready to provide consular assistance if needed, RT reported.

Two journalists from Russia's LifeNews Internet portal, which is widely believed to have links to Russian security services, were detained by Ukrainian security forces last weekend.

Ukraine's National Security Defense Council has since accused Oleg Sidyakin and Marat Saichenko, who have yet to be released, of involvement in terrorism.

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