

Journalist Says Reporters Set Up After Cameraman Killed in Ukraine

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An armed militiaman supporting the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic guards a checkpoint in the eastern Ukrainian city of Donetsk.

A Forbes correspondent who was with a group of journalists that came under fire from a military base in eastern Ukraine has said the news crews were set up by separatists, leading to an incident in which a Russian television cameraman died.

Ahead of the Sunday night shootout that killed Channel One cameraman Anatoly Klyan, the press service of the separatist People's Republic of Donetsk called journalists and told them to assemble near the rebel administration building, Forbes correspondent Orkhan Dzhemal wrote Monday in an [article posted on the magazine's Russian-language website](#).

A separatist rebel identified by his nom de guerre Gyurza, or Viper, addressed the gathering, telling reporters that they would travel with a group of Ukrainian women — the mothers of conscript servicemen — to a government military base whose commander had supposedly

agreed to surrender to the rebels, Dzhemal wrote.

"A deal has been reached with the base commander to surrender without a fight," the article quoted Gyurza as saying. "The servicemen's mothers will appear with signs ... and you will be able to prepare a sensational report. I will be the one conducting the actual talks; I have experience in that."

But no surrender agreement appeared to have been in place, as the bus came under fire outside of the army base.

"Most likely, there now will be a lot of statements about the inhumane Kiev fascists who shoot at journalists," Dzhemal wrote. "But everyone who was in that shootout understands that we were simply set up [in the line of fire]."

"It's not a coincidence this war is called a 'mostly informational' one; a shot-at bus with journalists aboard is also a propaganda coup, no less than a military base that surrenders," he wrote.

A video posted online by LifeNews television, whose crew was among those traveling to the base, showed Klyan — already injured — continuing to film while inside the bus. He then lowered his hand, saying: "I can't hold the camera any more."

Alexander Borodai, the Donetsk separatist premier, on Monday blamed the Ukrainian army for Klyan's death and for the killings and detentions of other reporters who covered the conflict, Itar-Tass reported.

Borodai and other separatist leaders also washed their hands off any involvement in the trip's organization, claiming the idea came from rank-and-file activists and that guilty parties would be punished.

Prosecutors of the self-proclaimed separatist republic have opened an investigation into the killing, and Borodai said his administration would "sort out with all strictness" the "sloppiness" of some unspecified activists who supposedly organized the journalists' trip, Gazeta.ru reported Monday.

In a statement issued Monday, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the "death of the Russian journalist has once again demonstrated convincingly that Ukrainian armed structures have no wish to de-escalate the armed conflict in the east of the country."

But Dzhemal, the Forbes correspondent, said the blame lay "unambiguously" with separatist leaders, though he was not sure how high up the chain of command, Ekho Moskvyy reported.

"Officially this will not be acknowledged, but it is obvious to everybody," he told the radio station.

Journalists went to film how the military base would surrender without the need for bloodshed, he told Ekho Moskvyy. "Instead, they came under a barrage of fire. It all looks to me like the fault of local leadership, although one can suppose there was a deal but the Ukrainian servicemen broke it. Or one can suppose something else."

Klyan, 68, had worked as a Channel One cameraman for 40 years, covering conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Iraq and Afghanistan. He had been scheduled to return to Moscow from Ukraine a day after he was killed, Channel One said.

See also:

[Russian Cameraman Killed in Eastern Ukraine](#)

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