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Editor of Russian-Language Newspaper Tortured and Killed in Eastern Ukraine

By Anna Dolgov

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The body of journalist Sergei Dolgov was found in a park in eastern Ukraine.

The editor of two Russian-language newspapers who was seized last month in eastern Ukraine and who was believed to have been held by Ukrainian government forces has been found dead, his colleague said in an online post.

The body of Sergei Dolgov, who was an editor at newspapers Hochu v SSSR, or "I want to be in the USSR," and Vestnik Priazovya, or "The Azov Region Courier" was found in a park near the eastern Ukrainian city of Dnipropetrovsk, according to a message posted on the Vkontakte page of Konstantin Dolgov, the editor of Glagol online news portal.

Konstatin Dolgov, who is also a leader of the pro-separatist People's Front of Novorossiya movement, added that his namesake had been "tortured" by kidnappers, saying "the enhanced interrogation ended in the death of the journalist."

According to employees of Vestnik Priazovya, Dolgov had been missing since mid-June when masked men armed with automatic rifles barged into their editorial offices in the eastern Ukrainian town of Mariupol and abducted Dolgov, tying up his hands with wire, 24.com.ua reported.

Serhiy Spasitel, the head of the Mariupol regional branch of Ukraine's Security Service, or SBU, said a few days later that Dolgov was alive and well, but that questions about his specific whereabouts should be addressed to Ukraine's Anti-Terror Center — the SBU agency in charge of combating the separatist movement in the country's east — i24.com.ua reported.

Mariupol Prosecutor Serhiy Reznitsky also denied any knowledge of the supposed abduction, saying police and prosecutors "do not always know what is happening [at the Anti-Terror Center]" i24.com.ua reported.

Oleksandr Kofman, a pro-Moscow activist in eastern Ukraine, accused government forces of killing Dolgov in retaliation for his political views.

"He was a principled journalist who upheld a position that contradicted the view of the new Kiev government," Kofman was quoted as saying by Interfax. "Sergei's murder is another crime for which the representatives of the Kiev administration will receive their due punishment sooner or later."

At least five foreign journalists — four Russians and one Italian — have been killed since the start of the conflict in eastern Ukraine, while a number of journalists have been detained or banned from entering the country in what some have dubbed a "war on information."

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