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Russia Lambastes UN, EU Rights Reports

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As Russia berates the West for its rights reportage, volunteers collect funds for those caught in eastern Ukraine.

Moscow lashed out on Tuesday over two major rights reports by blasting the EU for its "distorted" and "superficial" coverage of fundamental rights in Europe and slamming a UN report on Ukraine as "hypocritical."

Rights in EU

"In actuality, all things are not as rosy" in Europe as the authors of a report on fundamental rights would have the world believe, Russian human rights ombudsman Konstantin Dolgov said in a statement Tuesday.

Dolgov was speaking in reference to an annual report released in mid-July by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. The report highlighted measures taken to harmonize asylum laws throughout the EU, combat racism and xenophobia, fight child poverty, strengthen data protection laws and modernize border controls and visa processing.

However, the report failed to cover a number of serious issues, Dolgov said, such as abuse

of power by police, violations of the rights of prisoners, and the involvement of several European countries in "secret prisons" run by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Another neglected issue, he said, was the restriction of free speech, a topic that is "especially relevant in light of the blatant media blackout of Russian news agencies by the EU over the situation in Ukraine." As a result, Europeans have been deprived of the right to receive "objective, verified" information on the ongoing events in that country, he said.

UN's 'Distorted' Perspective

Foreign Ministry spokesman Alexander Lukashevich chimed in later Tuesday to denounce as "biased and hypocritical" a report by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that warned of a "reign of terror" in eastern Ukraine.

The report's main message is that the "Ukrainian government can continue to legitimately use force in its goal to restore law and order in the country's east," Lukashevich said in a statement, adding that this "effectively excuses the operation being carried out by Ukrainian punishers."

According to Lukashevich, the report distorted facts by asserting that the government in Kiev began its counterterrorism operation in the east in response to actions by pro-Russian separatists. In reality, he said, "the local population took up arms to protect themselves and their families from ultra-nationalists and neo-Nazis."

The report also ignored the Ukrainian National Guard's repeated use of Grad rockets, which resulted in 16 civilian deaths, Lukashevich said, adding that Human Rights Watch recently confirmed this fact in a report of its own.

See also:

UN Warns of 'Reign of Fear and Terror' in East Ukraine

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