

Russia Opens Case Over Attack on Reporter at Ukrainian Nationalist March

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Activists of the Svoboda (Freedom) and Right Sector Ukrainian nationalist parties hold torches as they take part in a rally to mark the 106th birthday anniversary of Stepan Bandera, one of the founders of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, in Kiev, Jan. 1, 2015.

Russia's Investigative Committee has opened a criminal case over the alleged attack on a Russian journalist who was covering a parade in Kiev celebrating the birthday of a Ukrainian nationalist leader.

In a statement published Friday, investigators said they intended to prosecute several individuals for the attack Thursday on Zhanna Kaprenko, a correspondent for pro-Kremlin newswire LifeNews.

The attackers stole the journalist's phone and broke her camera before later being apprehended by Ukrainian police, the statement said.

Russian investigators now want to charge the alleged assailants with stealing the journalist's personal belongings and preventing her from lawfully fulfilling her work as a journalist,

the statement said.

The incident occurred at a torchlit parade in Kiev marking the birthday of Stepan Bandera, a Ukrainian nationalist fighter viewed as a hero by some Ukrainians and branded a Nazi collaborator in Russia. About 2,500 people participated in the march, the BBC reported.

A LifeNews report on the incident published Thursday said the assailants had initially identified themselves as members of the Ukrainian ultranationalist group Right Sector and threatened to detain members of the news agency, which is thought to have links to the Russian security services and has repeatedly been accused in Ukraine of broadcasting misleading coverage and propaganda.

Russian investigators said Friday that while they were aware the suspects had already been taken into custody by Ukrainian police, they didn't trust authorities in Kiev to follow through with prosecuting them.

"We understand perfectly well that the current authorities in Kiev, politely speaking, sympathize with supporters of such events [nationalist parades]. We have serious reasons to believe that the criminal case opened by Ukraine's Interior Ministry is nothing more than a formality, and it's unlikely that any of the attackers, let alone the mastermind, will face responsibility for this crime," the statement said.

The identities of the suspects have yet to be revealed.

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