

Minsk Security Guard Smothers Russian Journalist to Prevent Her Questions

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Footage from a video showing a security guard holding a journalist to his chest to prevent her from speaking.

A video of a security guard physically smothering a Russian journalist to prevent her from asking a question at the Minsk peace talks has appeared online, on the same day that a prominent press watchdog criticized Ukraine, Belarus and Russia for limiting freedom of the press.

The video, which was uploaded Thursday to YouTube, shows Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko and Belarussian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko parting ways after talks in Minsk on a cease-fire deal in eastern Ukraine.

A female reporter from Russia's Rossia 24 television can be heard trying to ask Poroshenko how he thought the talks had gone, but she is cut off in mid-sentence. When the camera pans around, a security guard can be seen physically holding the woman to his chest to prevent her from speaking.

The woman is locked in this position for a few seconds as the guard repeatedly tells her "Hush, hush." When she is eventually released, the woman asks "What are you doing?" but does not receive a response.

It remained unclear from the video whether the guard was an employee of Poroshenko's presidential guard, as claimed by Russian media, or whether he belonged to a different security team.

The video appeared on the same day that press watchdog Reporters Without Borders released its annual Press Freedom Ranking 2014, on which the Commonwealth of Independent States, or CIS, countries performed particularly badly.

Ukraine, where several journalists were killed last year while reporting on the eastern crisis, dropped down one place in this year's rankings and placed 127th on the list. Belarus placed at 158th on the list, just as it did in 2013.

Russia also showed no movement and ranked in 149th place on the list, which was topped by northern neighbor Finland.

Watch the video here:

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2015/02/13/minsk-security-guard-smothers-russian-journalist-to-pr-event-her-questions-a43879>