Ukrainian Lawmaker Detained at Moscow Rally Faces Murder Charges

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A Ukrainian federal lawmaker detained at Sunday's silent march in memory of slain opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in Moscow now faces criminal charges for the attempted murder of a Russian citizen in Ukraine, the Interfax news agency reported.

Oleksiy Honcharenko, a member Ukraine's parliament and a delegate to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), was initially detained for disobeying police orders, the report said.

He now faces charges for the attempted murder and torture of a Russian citizen during pro-Russian demonstrations that turned deadly in the Ukrainian city of Odessa last May. A post on Honcharenko's Facebook page denounced the accusations against him as "absurd."

The head of Ukraine's PACE delegation, Volodymyr Ariev, said on his Facebook page that the organization should urge Russia to release Honcharenko and fellow parliamentarian Nadezhda Savchenko, who was detained last year.

Savchenko, a former pilot in the Ukrainian military, is being held in a high-security prison in Moscow, on suspicion of complicity in the deaths of two Russian journalists killed by mortar fire in June.

Savchenko, who is on hunger strike, was captured by pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine last summer, before being transferred to a Russian jail. A number of Western leaders have called for her release, but to no avail.