

Russian Pranksters Claim Responsibility for Fake Letter From Poroshenko

March 10, 2016



Nadezhda Savchenko

Russian pranksters Vladimir Kuznetsov and Alexei Stolyarov claim they wrote the fake letter from the Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to Nadezhda Savchenko, the Ukrainian pilot standing trial in Russia's Rostov region, news reports said Thursday.

The letter urged Savchenko, who was entering her sixth day of a dry hunger strike — refusing both food and water — to end the strike. After receiving it she agreed to start drinking water again.

“We found out that Nadezhda started another hunger strike and decided to intervene, so that she could calm down finally,” Kuznetsov told the Govorit Moskva radio station on Thursday. “[We] contacted Savchenko's lawyer [Mark] Feygin on behalf of Poroshenko's administration — he assured us he would convey any messages from the president,” Kuznetsov said.

He also claimed that during the course of the conversation with Feygin, the pranksters recommended that Savchenko plead guilty, and Feygin promised to “work on it,” Govorit

Moskva reported.

Feygin attributed the stunt with the letter to Russian law enforcement, saying they had pressured the defense team from the very beginning.

Savchenko, a military pilot, is on trial for allegedly “abetting in killing” two Russian state television journalists in war-torn eastern Ukraine in 2014. The prosecution asked the court to sentence her to 23 years in jail. Last week she declared a dry hunger strike after a court deprived her of a chance to make a final closing statement during a hearing. She later promised to continue the strike if her sentence was postponed for more than a week, regardless of significant deterioration of her health.

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