

Website Publishes New List of Journalists Working in Ukraine's Donbass

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May 20, 2016



Ukrainian nationalists have leaked a second list of the personal details of journalists working in the Donbass and Luhansk regions in eastern Ukraine.

The “Mirotvorets” (Peacekeeper) website released the new list despite widespread condemnation of the initial list published on the website. Mirotvorets justified their actions by calling media personnel working in the region “terrorist accomplices.”

“A lot of journalists have demanded an apology, and we finally understand why,” said a message posted on the website. “We would like to apologize for the first list because it really wasn't the most up-to-date information.”

The new list, containing data from February 2016, lists the personal details of 5,412 people, of which 2,082 are believed to be Russian journalists. A number of human rights activists were

also included on the list.

“There can be absolutely no excuse for publishing the personal details of at-risk journalists and human rights activists. Those misguided and highly compromised Ukrainian politicians, such as Anton Herashenko, who support these actions should be prosecuted for this criminal activity,” said managing editor of The Moscow Times Oliver Carroll, who worked extensively in eastern Ukraine from the start of the conflict in 2014.

“Their claim is that those of us who gained accreditation in the separatist enclaves are guilty of 'de facto collaboration.' This is a bogus argument. Good journalists cover every side of the story, and good journalists try to do so safely. In eastern Ukraine, this meant getting accreditation,” he said.

The first list was published by Mirotvorets on May 10, and provided the first and last names of 4,500 journalists, the media outlets they worked for, and, in some cases, their telephone numbers and email addresses.

“In such a climate of tension, this absurd mash-up exposes journalists to real danger and many of them started receiving threats right away,” said Johann Bihr, head of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Desk at the media freedom organization Reporters Without Borders.

“It also calls into question their ability to cover the conflict, as well as life inside the rebel areas. This intolerable attack on freedom of information must be treated with the utmost seriousness,” Bihr added.

Prosecutors in Kiev have opened a criminal case against Mirotvorets on charges of “obstructing the lawful professional activities of journalists” after complaints from Ukrainian and foreign reporters.

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