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UN Accuses Both Sides in Ukrainian Conflict of Torture

By The Moscow Times

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Ukrainian security services and pro-Russian separatist groups are both guilty of using torture in the Donbass conflict, a United Nations official has told reporters.

Assistant to the UN Secretary General for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic accused both sides of cruel treatment against those they had illegally detained, the Meduza news agency reported Friday.

Simonovic claimed that in some areas, Kiev's "disregard for human rights" had become entrenched, systemic, and needed to be urgently addressed, The Times newspaper reported.

A report revealing hundreds of cases is to be presented by the UN Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture, Simonovic said.

The subcommittee's delegation was forced to halt their inspection in Ukraine a day early after authorities denied them access to an alleged "off-the-books" security services prison.

The head of the delegation accused Ukraine of violating their obligations, a claim that the head of the country's Security Service denied. Ukraine maintains that the delegation was only banned from entering department branches located in the area of Donbass military operations where no prisoners were being held, Meduza reported.

Commenting on the UN's allegations later on Friday, spokesperson for the Ukrainian Security Service Yelena Gitlyanskaya denied any tortures, ill-treatment and detentions carried out by Ukrainian security services in the Donbass.

“We do not have any tortures. Ukraine's Security Service complies with all the norms of Ukrainian legislation and international conventions and treaties on human rights,” Gitlyanskaya was quoted as saying by the RIA Novosti news agency.

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