

Cuts, Beatings and Sheep's Blood: Russian State Journalist Sues Over War Correspondent Course Injuries

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A Russian state journalist has sued the organizer of a training course for war correspondents over injuries he says he received during the training.

Svyatoslav Pavlov's gruesome account of the course at a military site in Crimea included scenes of ripped earlobes and bags placed over journalists' heads causing asphyxiation. The courses are required for conflict journalists under a media law [passed](#) amid a war between pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian government that has raged in eastern Ukraine since 2014.

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Real-life marines roleplaying as terrorists had kicked, strangled and shot live rounds near

journalists taking the course in September, said Pavlov, an editor at the Kremlin-owned Rossiya Segodnya news outlet. One participant was taken away in an ambulance “in a hysterical fit,” Pavlov [wrote](#) on Facebook on Tuesday.

“The lectures’ main narrative is that a journalist is a nobody, can’t do anything and knows nothing, and needs to coordinate everything with the security forces,” Pavlov said.

The courses “culminated with a copious sprinkling of the beaten journalists with sheep’s blood,” he wrote.

A photograph Pavlov posted on his profile showed a laceration on his face. Doctors diagnosed him with a concussion and said that he had multiple bruises on the face, body and limbs, according to an attached diagnosis.

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Pavlov’s employer had urged him to “forget” about his injuries and promised to pay for his treatment, he said, recounting the employer’s words: “Injuries happen in hockey, right? This is just like in hockey.”

Pavlov has requested military investigators to open a criminal case against the organizers for exceeding their authority, the Mediazona news website [reported](#) Tuesday.

Rossiia Segodnya, which replaced RIA Novosti after President Vladimir Putin [liquidated](#) it in 2013, oversees a vast network of news outlets that include the pro-Kremlin Sputnik website.

The war correspondent courses have reportedly run since 2006 and have been [covered](#) by local media and the Antiterrorism Committee.

“With rare exceptions, journalists in Russia are perceived as service personnel, faceless wooden bobbleheads and not the mouthpiece of civil society,” Pavlov wrote.

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