

# URGENT ACTION

## JOURNALIST MISSING IN EASTERN UKRAINE

**Stanislav Aseev, a freelance journalist, has been missing in the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People’s Republic” (“DNR”) in eastern Ukraine since 2 June. His family and friends fear that he has been detained by the *de facto* authorities and is at risk of torture and ill-treatment.**

**Stanislav Aseev** is a freelance journalist from the separatist-controlled Donetsk, in eastern Ukraine. He works under a pseudonym, reporting about daily life in the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People’s Republic” (“DNR”). Stanislav Aseev last spoke to his family by phone on 2 June, saying that he was approaching Donetsk and that he would visit the next day.

Stanislav Aseev did not arrive on 3 June and did not answer his phone. His family went to look for him at the flat where he lives. Despite waiting outside for hours there was no sign of him. His family returned to the flat on 4 June, with his landlord. When they opened the door they saw clear signs that the flat had been searched.

Stanislav Aseev's family appealed to the local police and the “Ministry of State Security” regarding his whereabouts. As yet, they have not received a response. They have also visited two detention centers in Donetsk, but were not able to find him.

Since his last phone call on 2 June, there has been no verifiable information about Stanislav Aseev’s fate and whereabouts. His relatives and friends fear that he is in the custody of the DNR authorities. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

It is common practice for the DNR’s “Ministry of State Security” to place individuals they suspect of disloyalty to the DNR or “subversive” activities under arrest for 30-days (which can be repeatedly extended), and often hold them incommunicado.

### **Please write immediately in Russian, Ukrainian, English or your own language:**

- Urging the *de facto* authorities to immediately disclose the whereabouts of Stanislav Aseev and, if he is in their custody, not to subject him to arbitrary detention;
- Urging them to immediately end the practice of arbitrary detention of civilians and other violations of human rights by members of forces under their control, including torture and other ill-treatment.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BY E-MAIL ONLY BEFORE 11 AUGUST 2017 TO:**

#### Head of the DNR

Aleksandr Zakharchenko

Donetsk, Ukraine

Email: [op@dnr-sovet.su](mailto:op@dnr-sovet.su)

**Salutation: Dear Mr Zakharchenko**

#### DNR Minister of State Security

Vladimir Pavlenko

Donetsk, Ukraine

Email: [mgbdnr@yandex.ru](mailto:mgbdnr@yandex.ru)

**Salutation: Dear Mr Pavlenko**

#### **And copies to:**

#### Ombudsperson of the DNR

Daria Morozova

Donetsk, Ukraine

Email: [ombudsman\\_dnr@mail.ru](mailto:ombudsman_dnr@mail.ru)

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HER EXCELLENCY Ms Natalia Galibarenko, Embassy of Ukraine, 60 Holland Park W11 3SJ, 020 7727 6312, Fax 020 7792 1708, [emb\\_gb@mfa.gov.ua](mailto:emb_gb@mfa.gov.ua), [www.ukremb.org.uk](http://www.ukremb.org.uk)

**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The conflict in eastern Ukraine began in spring 2014, after the annexation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation. In April and May 2014, opponents of the new Kyiv government occupied buildings belonging to the local administrations and law enforcement agencies in several towns in the Donetsk and Luhansk Regions of eastern Ukraine (Donbass). Demanding increased local autonomy or independence from Ukraine, and closer ties with Russia, protest organizers formed armed groups, backed by the Russian Federation, and proclaimed the creation of the “Donetsk People’s Republic” and “Luhansk People’s Republic”. In response, the authorities in Kyiv launched what they characterized as a “counter terrorist operation” (antiteroristichna operatsiya – ATO) aimed at retaking control of the area.

In the self-proclaimed “republics”, local security services operate with no checks and balances, detain individuals arbitrarily and hold them in their own detention facilities. Often, detainees are subjected to 30 days of “administrative detention” during which they have no access to the outside world. Amnesty International and other organizations monitoring human rights have also documented cases when such detainees are tortured and ill-treated in order to extract a forced “confession”, which is then used by a de facto court for conviction.

For more details about such practices, please see the joint report by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch *You Don’t Exist: Arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and torture in eastern Ukraine*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/4455/2016/en/>

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