

# URGENT ACTION

## RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF INJURED POW

Artem Kolomiets is a prisoner of war combat medic who was captured in May 2022 during the siege of Mariupol. His health condition is critical, and his life is in danger due to torture and other ill-treatment inflicted health issues and denial of adequate medical aid. He is kept incommunicado. As a gravely ill POW, he must be immediately repatriated to Ukraine or accommodated in a neutral country on health grounds.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

**Tatiana Moskalkova**  
**Human Rights Commissioner**  
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**Dear Human Rights Commissioner,**

*I am writing to express my grave concern with the case of a seriously ill and wounded Ukrainian POW combat medic Artem Kolomiets. He was captured in May 2022 in Mariupol, and his captivity was confirmed by ICRC. He is held incommunicado in Perm, tortured and subjected to other forms of ill-treatment that caused his health condition grave deterioration and now puts his life at risk according to the recent testimonies of former POWs. At the time of his capture, Artem had severe spine damage, a torn knee meniscus. No proper treatment was provided for his wounds. In captivity, his health deteriorated further due to torture and other ill-treatment and he suffered critical weight loss, severe spine damage, developed asthma, and stomach and duodenal ulcers.*

*All POWs who are gravely wounded or gravely sick, or whose mental or physical well-being is endangered by captivity must be repatriated to Ukraine or accommodated in neutral country. **I urge you to take all steps within your authority to ensure that Artem Kolomiets:***

- *is released from captivity on health grounds;*
- *pending his release, is treated humanely, provided with adequate healthcare, and guaranteed the right to correspondence.*

*Yours sincerely,*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Senior sergeant Kolomiiets is a Ukrainian combat medic, senior sergeant of the 12th brigade of the Ukrainian National Guard of Ukraine ("Azov"). He has been in Russian captivity for over 1000 days. He is held incommunicado, so the only information about him comes to his relatives from former POWs who were in captivity with Artem. The last update the relatives received was in December 2024. Since childhood, Artem was helping wounded stray animals, so his family thought he'd grow up to become a vet. As an adult, he had a dream of being a doctor because he wanted to help people, and his dream was fulfilled in the army. In the first days of the full-scale invasion, Mariupol was surrounded by Russian forces. The defence of Mariupol lasted for 86 days (82 of which it was completely surrounded). As the city was being razed to the ground by Russian attacks and Russian forces were gaining ground inside Mariupol, civilians and Ukrainian military used Azovstal plant as a shelter. As a combat medic, Artem was tending to the wounded and saving lives during Mariupol defence (including providing medical aid to civilians) and on Azovstal. His brothers-in-arms note that he was truly dedicated to performing his medical duties, risking his life to do so. Estimates about the exact number of people who were sheltering at Azovstal vary, but at least 177 civilians (including 47 children) and over 1900 Ukrainian defenders left Azovstal on May 20, when the remaining Ukrainian forces were given an order by Ukrainian authorities to save their own lives, which meant surrendering to Russian forces. The actual number of people seeking shelter there over the course of over 2 months is likely to be higher. Unfortunately, due to severe shelling, it is also likely that many civilians and Ukrainian fighters died there. Artem was wounded during Mariupol and Azovstal defence, and went into captivity on May 20, 2022. As Russia does not have POW camps (which is also a violation of IHL), he, like many other Ukrainian POWs, was transferred between Russian penal colonies throughout his captivity. It is known that at some stage of his captivity he was in Taganrog. It is known from former POWs that in a colony that allowed medical aid for POWs, Artem continued fulfilling his medical duties while being in captivity. His most recent known place of captivity is in Perm, Russia. There are testimonies that in Perm, POWs are collectively punished for asking for medical aid, so Artem is both unable to help other POWs and unable to get the medical care that he needs.

IHL (particularly, the Third Geneva Convention) guarantees basic rights to prisoners of war. The rights of POWs include but are not limited to humane treatment (art. 13), adequate living conditions (art. 25), food quality and quantity (art. 26), medical care (art. 30), the right to send and receive correspondence (art. 71), to receive relief shipments (art. 72-74). Moreover, those who are gravely wounded or gravely sick, or whose mental or physical well-being is endangered by captivity must be repatriated to Ukraine or accommodated in neutral country, as guaranteed by art. 109 and 110.

According to Amnesty International research and UN OHCHR report, Ukrainian POWs face widespread and systemic torture and ill-treatment in captivity and are often held incommunicado. Artem's family received no letters from him, the only information they have is from former PoWs, according to whom, Artem did not receive any letters from his family either, which is a violation of the right to correspondence.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Russian

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** October 2025

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Artem Kolomiiets (He/Him)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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