

URGENT ACTION

DISAPPEARED MAN FREED FROM SECRET DETENTION

Dmytro Koroliiov was released on 2 August after spending one year in secret detention in the Security Service of Ukraine compound in Kharkiv, northeast Ukraine. At least 12 others were also released from secret detention between 25 July and 2 August.

Dmytro Koroliiov, was released on 2 August after spending one year in unacknowledged, unlawful detention in the compound of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) in Kharkiv, in north-eastern Ukraine. He was given 100 Ukrainian Hryvnya (circa US\$4) to pay for his transport home and warned not to tell anyone what had happened to him. Six men and one woman were also released from the Kharkiv compound on 2 August, and a further six men had been released from the same compound earlier, on 25 July, all of them victims of enforced disappearance like Dmytro Koroliiov.

Dmytro Koroliiov, a former Ukrainian riot policeman from Zaporizhzhie in eastern Ukraine, was given a suspended five-year sentence on 2 July 2015 for creating an unlawful armed group and dodging conscription. On 3 August 2015, he was supposed to be released as per his sentence but he was instead subjected to enforced disappearance by the SBU and taken to their compound in Kharkiv.

Despite Dmytro Koroliiov's family's efforts to establish his fate, including reporting his abduction to the authorities, no information about his whereabouts was ever disclosed to them during his detention, and the official involvement in his disappearance was consistently denied. A criminal investigation was opened after he was forcibly disappeared in August 2015, but no progress was made in establishing his fate or identifying the perpetrators. After returning home, Dmytro Koroliiov went to the local police station, explained what had happened to him and agreed to close the criminal investigation into his disappearance.

Amnesty International interviewed seven of the people released on 25 July and 2 August. They corroborated the allegation that the SBU is operating an unofficial secret detention centre at its compound in Kharkiv. Their respective claims and stories, independently of each other, repeated the same key details and were consistent with the information detailed in the report *You don't exist?: Arbitrary Detentions, Enforced Disappearances, and Torture in Eastern Ukraine* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR50/4455/2016/en/>), which Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch published jointly on 21 July.

Amnesty International has informed the Chief Military Prosecutor of Ukraine about the release of Dmytro Koroliiov and other 12 people and will be monitoring the progress of the investigation into the allegations of enforced disappearances and secret detention of individuals by the SBU.

Thank you to all those who sent appeals. No further action is requested from the UA network.

This is the first update of UA 180/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR50/4563/2016/en/>

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