

# STOP TARGETING

RESPONDING TO THREATS TO CIVIL SOCIETY

# ACTIVISTS

JULY –

AUGUST 2018



COALITION  
TO PROTECT  
CIVIL  
SOCIETY

# MONITORING OF THE CASES OF ATTACKS AGAINST CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIVISTS

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Abduction, assaults, beatings, psychological pressure, arson and murder. During July and August, monitors participating in the Coalition to Protect Civil Society recorded **23 cases of attacks against civic activists.**

**THIS TEXT PROVIDES AN OVERVIEW OF ALL THESE CASES. SOME OF THEM REQUIRE MORE IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION, AND MORE DETAILS WILL BE KNOWN ONLY AFTER RECEIVING THE OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION RESULTS. MEANWHILE, WE ARE SHARING WITH YOU A DESCRIPTION OF THE CASES THAT ARE BEING DOCUMENTED BY COALITION MEMBERS.**

**Vitaliy Oleshko**, a local businessman, civic activist and ATO participant, **was shot dead** in Berdiansk, Zaporizhzhya oblast.

The assault took place in the courtyard of the hotel owned by the Oleshkos. Two people arrived in a red car, entered the courtyard and shot Vitaliy Oleshko in the back. The activist died on the spot in front of his wife and his friend.

The police believe Vitaliy Oleshko was assassinated by a contract killer. The Zaporizhzhya oblast Court of Appeals has decided to hold four suspects of assassination in custody as the investigation proceeds.

**Volodymyr Dergilyov, Anton Chernomorets and Sergey Tyshyk** **were abducted** from the Military and Civil Administration building in Avdiyivka, Donetsk oblast (territory controlled by the government of Ukraine). Their abductors wore camouflage uniforms. According to several testimonies, there were five to ten people in the group.

All three kidnapped activists are representatives of the city organization "Public Platform for the Protection of the Constitution of Ukraine and Citizen Rights". The crime took place while the activists were meeting with the head of Avdiyivka Military and Civil Administration Pavlo Malykhin, who refused to comment on the incident.

The attackers brought the activists to an industrial area in Avdiyivka where they punched the activists in the face and in the head, later abandoning them near the "Butovski" suburban cottage district. All three activists managed to get back to the settlement and appeal to the police.

In Kherson, the Chief Administrator of the City Council executive committee and the civic activist **Kateryna Handzyuk** **was attacked** by an unknown perpetrator who poured concentrated acid on her.

The acid splashed all over her arm, back and face. Ms. Handzyuk is hospitalized with third degree burns on her body.

At first, the police classified the attack as an act of hooliganism. Later, the case was requalified as "grievous bodily harm aimed at intimidation". The following day, the qualification of the incident was again changed and the police began investigating it as "attempted murder".

The police arrested five suspects.

Five unknown men in masks **beat Pavlo Karas**, a deputy of Cherkasy City Council, and threatened him with weapons in his house in Heronymivka village.

The attackers stole 200 000 UAH and two cars. They bound Pavlo Karas' hands and demanded that he stop engaging in political activity and withdraw from running for the mayor of Cherkasy.

In Vyshneve, Kyiv oblast, the activist **Ihor Hryshachov**, who opposes illegal construction in the Svyatoshynska Street park area, **was attacked.**

The activist's upper lip ruptured as a result of the attack, and he suffers from multiple hematomas on the face and head, and a severe injury of his finger. Doctors also detected a concussion and damage to

his eye nerve.

Mr. Hryshachov is convinced that the attack was due to his civic activity opposing the construction in the park zone. Ihor Hryshachov, who lives next to the park and is directly affected by the illegal construction, not only participates in protest activities against the construction but also filed a lawsuit against the work.

An **assault** on the Chairman of the Center for Countering Corruption (CCC) **Vitaliy Shabunin** occurred in Kyiv at a rally of anti-corruption activists.

The activist organized a campaign calling for the resignation of Nazar Holodnytskyi. Camouflaged opponents of the protest poured an antiseptic known as brilliant green on Shabunin and threw cakes at him. According to a medical report, as a result of the attack Shabunin received chemical burns to both of his eyes.

Police officers present at the scene did not prevent or stop the attack on Shabunin, nor did they try to detain the attackers.

Members of the radical right-wing organization C14 **attacked** the attorney **Oleh Povalyayev** in the Kyiv Court of Appeal.

At the door to the courtroom, the lawyer faced some 30 young people. Shouting abusive and obscene words, they started threatening Povalyayev with violence because the lawyer, in their opinion, was defending the "wrong" client.

The lawyer said something to this group and after that they grabbed him by his hands and hit him in the face.

Police officers present in the court did not react to the threats at all.

In Kryvyi Rih police officers **beat** the attorney **Oksana Ragozina**. The incident occurred within the Investigative Department of the National Police Headquarters in Kriviy Rih, where she arrived together with a client to attend his interrogation.

Mrs. Ragozina's client wanted to go out to buy some coffee at a nearby shop, but police officers prohibited him from doing so in a rude manner.

They started to beat the defendant and forced him back into the police station. After Rogozina began recording the incident on her mobile phone, police officers knocked the phone from her hands and hit her on the head, after which she fell to the ground. The police kicked her legs and forcibly removed her from the police station.

In Kamyanske, Dnipropetrovsk oblast, **Vitaliy Chernyavskiy**, Director of the Municipally-owned Enterprise "Tramway", member of Kamyanske City Council, and locally known for his volunteer activity in the area of the ATO area **was injured** while riding a minibus which exploded.

After the explosion, the driver managed to jump out of the vehicle.

Mr. Cherniavskiy was in the minibus with his dog, which died because of the explosion. The councilmember is alive, but suffers from severe injuries.

According to eyewitnesses, the minibus explosion was preceded by a loud sound similar to the explosion of an explosive substance charge. The explosion shattered windowpanes in nearby houses.

In July, **two female activists** of the STAN Youth Organization **were harassed** by members of the regional SSU department in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast.

In Odesa, a car transporting the Director of Odesa branch of "People's Movement of Ukraine" **Mykhailo Kuzakon** and journalist **Hryhoriy Kozma** **was intentionally** hit by a GAZ truck driving at a high speed.

The truck driver jumped out of the car and fled the crime scene on a motorbike with two people who were waiting for him.

Both activists connect the attempted murder with their civic activities and report receiving threats previously.

Chuhuyiv human rights activist and lawyer **Roman Lykhachov** reported **receiving threats** in the presence of other people from the Chief of Chuhuyiv Police Department, Yevhen Krainyuk. Mr. Likhachov connects the threats to his activism around the possible murder of the local

environmental activist Mykola Bychko. Roman Likhachov published on his Facebook page screenshots of threats he received such as "you are already dead", "you're a shithhead", "you're a fool" and other obscene words.

In Mariupol, a group of people wearing black clothes and balaklavas **broke into** a concert of the band oDemantaGo taking place at the TIU art platform. The attackers sprayed pepper gas, started to destroy everything in the place, broke musical instruments and beat the performers and attendees of the concert.

The car of the Derhachi district council deputy Anatoliy Banghen **was set** on fire by unknown subjects in the settlement of Derhachi in Kharkiv region.

The deputy believes that the arson was revenge for his civic activism. Mr. Banghen raised the issue of the poor-quality of asphaltting of the pavement on Kooperatyvna Street in the village.

An **explosive device was thrown** into the courtyard of the "Chesno" movement activist **Serhiy Chaharov** in the village of Hatne, Kyiv oblast. Mr. Chaharov believes that this is "not just hooliganism but an attempt to intimidate".

Five cases of harassment were targeted against LGBTI activists. In Kryvyi Rih more than ten unknown men **attacked** and **beat Boris Zolotchenko**, the Head of "KryvbassPride" festival organizing committee. Zolotchenko was working with others to organize an Equality March in the city in support of the LGBTI community. In Lyiv, a man committed **a hate-motivated attack** on the transgender activist **Anastasia-Eva Domani** in a tram. In Chernivtsi and Uzhhorod, representatives of nationalist organizations **tried to prevent** the holding of Equality Festivals in these cities. The District Administrative Court of Kyiv has **refused** to satisfy a claim for refugee status of a transgender activist, **Soldado Kovalisidi**, who fled Russia due to persecution.



In the Russia-controlled Crimea, the Rozdolne District Court **sentenced** the Ukrainian activist **Volodymyr Balukh** **to five years of general regime colony** imprisonment and fined him ten thousand rubles (about \$150) in the second criminal case against him claiming disruption of the temporary detention facility operations.

In Verkhnya Kutuzovka village, a **search took place** in the house of the activist of "Crimean Solidarity" Association **Gulsum Aliyeva**.

As a result of the search, the FSB officers seized phones and office equipment of the entire family. A protocol against Gulsum was issued. Ms. Aliyeva is accused of stirring up interethnic hostility through posts in social media.

In Simferopol, the FSB conducted a search in the house of Ukrainian Cultural Center (UCC) activist Olha Pavlenko. According to security officials, the search took place with the approval of the Kyivsky district court of Simferopol. During the search, all the digital equipment of the activist was confiscated.

Ms. Pavlenko is suspected of associating with representatives of the Right Sector, who allegedly were preparing to kill people in Crimea.

**MORE ABOUT OUR ACTIVITIES CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEBSITE [CS-COALITION.ORG](http://CS-COALITION.ORG)**  
**+ [MAP OF THREATS TO CIVIL SOCIETY](#)**

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