



Ukrainian political prisoners: hostages of Russia's hybrid war

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Information: a crucial part of Russia's hybrid war.

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Information: a crucial part of Russia's hybrid war.

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Russia uses video game pictures to claim US helped Isil



4

(November 9, 2017)



The defence ministry claimed these images showed an ISIS convoy fleeing under US protection. They

Faked evidence

Russia's fake 'news' against Ukraine has a military goal.

- Russia is de facto at war with Ukraine;
- Russian media operate by law of war;
- Goals: to create the image of the enemy, and consolidate people around a strong leader;
- Russian propaganda shapes an 'enemy' out of Ukraine to gain the support of Russians for its military actions in Ukraine;
- Without the support of Russians, Russia would not be able to wage its wars.

Seen as a graph...

2 WAYS MEDIA CAN WORK



BY LAW OF PEACETIME



BY LAW OF WAR

2 MAIN GOALS:

1. RAISE MORALE OF YOUR OWN GUYS

A. RAISE BATTLE SPIRITS

B. CREATE THE IMAGE OF AN ENEMY

2. DEMORALIZE YOUR OPPONENT

A. CREATE DIVISIONS, DESTROY UNITY

B. CONVINCE THEM THEY ARE DOOMED

C. URGE THEM TO CAPITULATE

The fake 'news' requires fake 'crimes'.



- At least 56 Ukrainians are imprisoned by Russia on trumped-up charges for political reasons;
- Their made-up crimes are used to reinforce the image of the Ukrainian 'enemy' on Russian state TV;
- The persecution also intimidates Crimean Tatars, the indigenous population of occupied Crimea.

Fake terrorists and extremists

- “Sentsov group” – natives of Crimea who resisted occupation
- Were accused of terrorism based on testimonies received through torture
- Sentsov as the leader of a “terrorist group” sentenced to 20 years in prison



Oleg Sentsov

20 years



Oleksandr Kolchenko

10 years



Oleksiy Chyorny

7 years

Fake terrorists and extremists

- Syzonovych: a 61 pensioner accused of “terrorism” on ludicrous charges , trial lasted 3 days
- Pavlo Hryb: 19-year old teenager who FSB kidnapped from the territory of Belarus (!) and accused of terrorism based on a Skype joke with girlfriend



Oleksiy Syzonovych
12 years



Pavlo Hryb

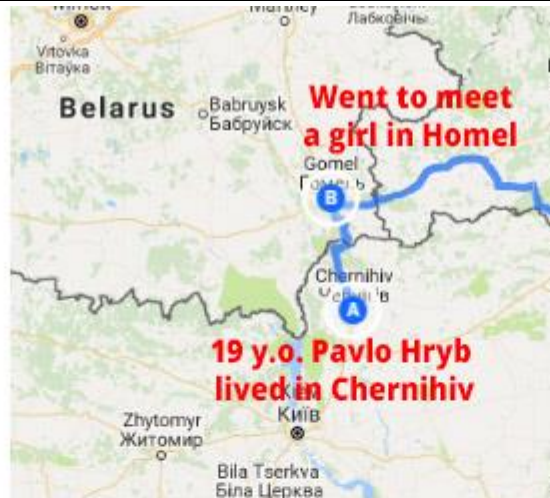


Mykola Dadeu

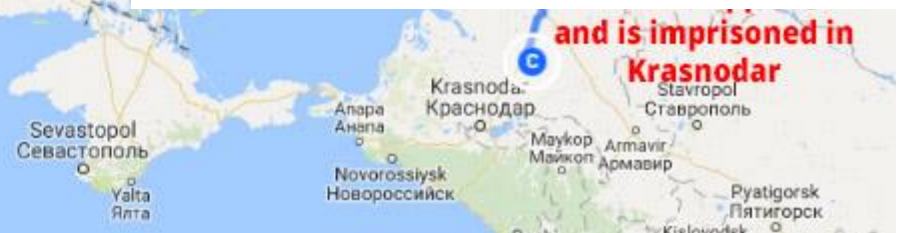
The kidnapping of Pavlo Hryb



Pavlo Hryb



- Has a serious health condition, is denied doctor's visits & medicine;
- Is interested in Ukrainian nationalism and history



Repressions against Crimean Tatars

- Crimean Tatars are the indigenous population of occupied Crimea, are opposed to Russian occupation
- Crimean Tatar Mejlis banned, media shut down, leaders banned from entering Crimea



Repressions against Crimean Tatars



- But two jailed with them on political charges still imprisoned

Akhtem Chiyboz, Ilmi Umerov free!

- 2 Crimean Tatar leaders - released



Mustafa Dehermendzhy



Ali Asanov

Crimean Muslims branded as “terrorists and extremists”

- 29 Crimean Tatars imprisoned on accusation of participating in **Hizb ut-Tahrir** and **Tablighi Jamaat**, peaceful religious Muslim organizations
- Russia among few countries in the world to ban both
- Both legal in Ukraine



Crimean Muslims branded as “terrorists and extremists”

- FSB makes career on mass arrests on accusation of belonging to Hizb ut-Tahrir and Tablighi Jamaat – needs to “prove” only membership, not malicious intent or acts;
- “Proof of membership” is based on anonymous “witnesses” and dubious experts
- Four Crimean Tatars sentenced, accused of Hizb ut-Tahrir; all four deny it.

Accused of “spying on Russia”

- Cases classified, difficult to defend or even find out what happened
- Journalist Sushchenko under trial in Moscow now



Valentyn Vyhivskiy

11 years



Viktor Shur

22 years



Roman Sushchenko

Accused of war crimes

- Karpiuk + Klykh: Accused of mass murder in Chechen war 20 years ago; testimonies extracted through torture
- Lytvynov accused of committing atrocities against Donbas population as part of Ukrainian forces resisting Russian-separatist forces



TV shows depicting fake “crimes” drive up hate against Ukraine

- The Kremlin’s chief spin doctor Dmitry Kiselev depicting imagined rapes and murders committed by Lytvynov



Punished for Euromaidan

- Ukraine's Euromaidan revolution of 2013-2014 unleashed the tidal wave of disinformation against the country which continues till today, and which remains a prominent motive for imprisoning Ukrainians till this day.



Mykola Shyptur

9 years



Oleksandr Kostenko

3.5 years



Andriy Kolomyiets

10 years



Volodymyr Balukh

3.5 years

“Ukrainian saboteurs in Crimea”



Dmytro Shtyblikov



Oleksiy Bessarabov



Volodymyr Dudka



Oleksiy Stohniy



Hlib Shabliy

3.5 years



Yevhen Panov



Andriy Zakhtey



Volodymyr Prysych

3 years



Rydvan Suleymanov


- Accused of planning sabotage attacks on occupied Crimea on behalf of Ukrainian special services;
- All featured in televised “confessions” and block-buster like videos produced by FSB;
- Two sentenced on other charges.

“Ukrainian saboteurs in Crimea”

- Kiselyov telling about the successes of the valiant “FSB” which managed to thwart a Ukrainian government sabotage attack



Living proof for Kremlin's "reality"

- 
- The Russian flag is displayed as a horizontal bar at the top of the slide, featuring three equal-width horizontal stripes of white, blue, and red from top to bottom.
- Ukrainian saboteurs, extremists, spies, war criminals are everywhere!
 - Crimean Tatars are dangerous terrorists

Fabricating the needed verdict

- **Kidnappings, brutal torture** to extract a “confession”;
- Victims say they were willing to sign anything to stop the pain;
- “Confessions” **incriminate other Kremlin prisoners**, are sometimes sole basis for accusation;
- **Anonymous witnesses** and **unconvincing experts**; manipulation of evidence in court
- Prisoners are **held incommunicado**, they have no access to an independent lawyer, or consul;
- **Planted drugs or weapons** if initial plot fails

Torture from Stalin's times



- “Then everything repeated, but the blow went to the back of my head. They said I have two options: either I will lose my health and will do what they say, or I will do what they say, but will still have my health. Then they electrocuted me, attached them [electrodes] to my buttocks and hit me. [...] Then they electrocuted me with stronger shocks and attacked the electrodes in another way. They sat on my back so that I couldn't move at all. I fainted. The pain was terrible, my tongue went numb, I couldn't talk. Probably, they showered me with water, it was flowing out of my mouth when I woke up. A bag was on my head, I couldn't see anything...”
- - **Renat Paralamov, Crimean Tatar tortured by FSB**

Torture from Stalin's times



- Then, on the second night [...] masked men came into my cell and dragged me into the basement, after which a man that called himself 'Sasha' began to torture me with electric current which shocked me through metal caps that he placed on my fingers. This lasted for three nights in a row, during which he asked me about Chechnya and Crimea. If his answer did not satisfy him, he increased the voltage. After each execution, masked men came to disinfect my wounds with iodine and brilliant green, because in some places my skin was worn off almost to the bones (to this day, I can't stand on my knees or wear handcuffs because the layer of skin on my hands is still very thin). [...] 'Sasha' came into the cell, hit me in the ribs and legs and said that I should say that I cut the throat of two Russian soldiers on ploshchad Minutka."
- **Stanislav Klykh, accused of fighting in Chechnya**

Ukrainian prisoners of the Kremlin are not saints

- Different backgrounds, some have complicated biographies;
- All are cynically used by Russian state media to create propaganda which drives the war;
- All are denied right to a fair trial.

Some ideas to free the prisoners

- Boycotting World Cup 2018;
- Sanctions against those responsible for torture;
- Demanding visits of independent doctors;
- “Power of shaming,” international attention, political pressure;
- Facilitating prisoner swaps;
- Attending the trials;
- Publicity, support from moral authorities.

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