

# URGENT ACTION

## DE-FACTO AUTHORITIES DENY HOLDING JOURNALIST

**Stanislav Aseev, a freelance journalist, has been missing in the self-proclaimed “Donetsk People’s Republic” (DNR) in eastern Ukraine since 2 June. The pro-Russian separatist authorities in Donetsk deny having any information regarding his whereabouts but Amnesty International has heard from a confidential source that he is under the custody of the de-facto “Ministry of State Security.”**

After **Stanislav Aseev** disappeared on 2 June his family began searching for him by appealing to the local police and the de-facto “Ministry of State Security” (MGB). To date, both institutions have repeatedly denied holding any information regarding his whereabouts.

Representatives of the pro-Russian separatist authorities also denied knowing anything about Stanislav Aseev during an official meeting in Minsk on 5 July. This was confirmed by Iryna Geraschenko, the Ukrainian President's Humanitarian Envoy at the Minsk peace talks, who inquired about Stanislav Aseev during the meeting and posted the response received on Facebook.

On 8 July, Amnesty International received information from a source in Donetsk that Stanislav Aseev is currently held by the MGB. It is common practice for the MGB to place individuals they suspect of disloyalty to the “Donetsk People’s Republic” or of “subversive” activities under arrest for 30-days (which can be repeatedly extended), and often to hold them incommunicado, including without acknowledging their determination. The source told Amnesty International that Stanislav Aseev’s detention has been extended. It is not known whether Stanislav Aseev has been charged with any crime. The source wanted to remain anonymous, fearing repercussions.

Stanislav Aseev remains at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- 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.

**Contact these two officials by 23 August, 2017:**

Head of the DNR  
Aleksandr Zakharchenko  
Artyoma St., 68,  
Donetsk, Ukraine  
Email: [op@dnr-sovet.su](mailto:op@dnr-sovet.su)  
Salutation: Dear Mr. Zakharchenko

Ambassador Valeriy Chaly  
Embassy of Ukraine  
3350 M St NW, Washington DC 20007  
Phone: 1 202 349 2963 | Fax: 1 202 333 0817  
Email: [emb\\_us@mfa.gov.ua](mailto:emb_us@mfa.gov.ua)  
Salutation: Dear Ambassador

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 160.17*

Here’s why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

On 3 June, when Stanislav Aseev did not appear and there were no answers from his phone, his family went to look for him at the flat where he lives. Despite waiting there for hours there was no sign of him. Increasingly concerned, 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 has 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.

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 organisations 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/>

Name: Stanislav Aseev  
Gender m/f: male