

# URGENT ACTION

## UKRAINIAN NURSERY TEACHER JAILED BY RUSSIA

Olha Baranevska, a retired, openly pro-Ukrainian nursery teacher from Melitopol, refused to return to work at the nursery under the Russian occupation. In May 2024, she was abducted by the occupying authorities from her home and allegedly tortured. A month later, she was briefly released only to be arbitrarily arrested and accused of hiding explosives in her garden and sentenced to six years in prison. Meanwhile her elderly mother died, and her own health is at risk.

### TAKE ACTION:

- Write a letter to the government official(s) listed. Use the sample letter below as a guide or use your own words.
- [Click here](#) to report your action(s) on **UA 17.25**. We share this number with the officials we are trying to persuade.

**[\\*Note: USPS does not offer delivery to Russia. Email target below.](#)**

***Send a copy of your letter to the Russian Permanent Mission to the UN (see address below):***

**Tatiana Moskalkova**  
**Human Rights Commissioner**  
Emails: [Moskalkova@ombudsmanrf.ru](mailto:Moskalkova@ombudsmanrf.ru)  
[A.Ovchinnikova@rightsruf.ru](mailto:A.Ovchinnikova@rightsruf.ru)  
[A.Scherbakova@rightsruf.ru](mailto:A.Scherbakova@rightsruf.ru)

**CC: Russian Permanent Mission to the United Nations**  
**Ambassador Nebenzia Vassily Alekseevich**  
136 East 67 Street,  
New York, NY 10065  
Email: [mission@russiaun.ru](mailto:mission@russiaun.ru) or  
[press@russiaun.ru](mailto:press@russiaun.ru)

Dear Human Rights Commissioner,

I am writing to express concern for the treatment of Ukrainian civilians in the Ukrainian territories occupied by Russia, and specifically for the retired nursery teacher, **Olha Baranevska (Olga Baranevskaya)**. I believe she might have been targeted for her pro-Ukrainian sentiments. She disappeared from her home in Melitopol on May 15, 2024. A local resident reported seeing her briefly brought home, bruised, and escorted away by three ununiformed men on May 19, 2024.

On June 27, 2024, Olha was arbitrarily arrested by police for purportedly violating the curfew. Meanwhile, the authorities reported finding explosives in her garden. At the trial that followed in November, Melitopol Interdistrict Court convicted Olha Baranevska under Art. 222.1(1) of the Russian Criminal Code (unlawful possession of explosives) and sentenced her to six years in prison, based on questionable evidence, including Olha's "confession".

I urge you to ensure that Olha Baranevska is immediately and unconditionally released, unless credible evidence of a crime of which she can be plausibly suspected is presented. I ask that you ensure the circumstance of her abduction, arbitrary detention, alleged torture, and the alleged falsification of evidence are investigated, and all those suspected of these human rights violations are held accountable in fair trials.

Yours sincerely,

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Melitopol is a Ukrainian town in Zaporizhzhia Region, which came under Russian occupation in February 2022. While some residents left to avoid living under the occupation, including **Olha Baranevska's** daughter, Olha stayed behind to look after her elderly mother (who later died while Olha was in detention). Video greetings from Olha was published on Facebook, including updates about the life in Melitopol under the Russian occupation, in the Ukrainian language. Among Olha's Facebook posts was a story about a colleague who faced harassment by the occupation authorities, including a house search, verbal abuse, and destruction of personal items with national Ukrainian symbols.

The nursery where Olha had worked, reopened under Russian occupation. She was repeatedly asked to return to teaching there but consistently refused. Amnesty International has [documented abusive practices targeting Ukrainian teachers by the occupying Russian authorities](#), including intimidation, physical violence and forced labor, to ensure that they resume teaching local children under Russian curriculum. The organization has also documented Russian policy aimed at changing the demography of the territories it occupies, including by [seeking to eradicate Ukrainian and other non-Russian identities and culture](#).

Olha Baranevska is 61 years old, has diabetes and is insulin-dependent, and has other health conditions that require examination and treatment. She had to accept a Russian passport in 2023 to get access to healthcare. While in detention she has been provided with insulin but denied adequate treatment of other health issues, according to her daughter. While in detention, on her 85-year-old mother's birthday, Olha received news of the mother's passing away in November 2024, causing her further mental suffering.

Amnesty International has documented numerous violations of human rights of Ukrainian civilians and violations of international humanitarian law by Russian forces and occupying authorities in Ukraine. These included [war crimes and likely crimes against humanity](#), among them unlawful transfer or deportation of civilians from certain occupied parts of Ukraine. Abduction, enforced disappearance and unlawful imprisonment, and torture and other ill-treatment of civilians in Russian-occupied Ukraine have been widely reported. Amnesty International has documented numerous instances of such practices in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, since 2014, and in other Russian-occupied territories since. Torture and other ill-treatment, including denial of adequate healthcare in custody, and denial of the right to a fair trial, are also commonplace in Russia.

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Russian or your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** May 31, 2025

**NAME AND PRONOUN:** Olha Baranevska (she/her)