



# URGENT APPEAL

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### Ukraine: Disappearance of human rights defender Oleh Baturin

On 12 March 2022, Ukrainian human rights organizations reported that human rights defender and journalist **Oleh Baturin** has disappeared in Kakhovka, Kherson region. The colleagues of the human rights defender have legitimate reason to believe that the Russian military is responsible for his disappearance. Front Line Defenders believes that Oleh's disappearance may be linked to his reporting on human rights violations, committed by the Russian military throughout their invasion of Ukraine.

Oleh Baturin is a Ukrainian journalist and human rights defender from Kakhovka, Kherson region. He is the editor-in-chief of the "Novy Den" ("New Day") media outlet. Since 2014, Oleh Baturin has extensively covered human rights violations in the Crimean peninsula annexed by Russia and the unrecognized People's Republics of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine. Since the beginning of Russia's full scale military invasion and war on Ukraine, the human rights defender has documented human rights violations being carried out by the Russian military.

On 12 March 2022, Oleh Baturin's colleagues reported that he was scheduled to have a meeting with an acquaintance at a bus stop near his home in Kakhovka. The human rights defender's relative confirmed that he left their apartment, stating that he would be back in 20 minutes, yet he never returned and has been missing since. Local social media-based chats confirmed that the Russian military was spotted at the same bus stop, as the nearby city, Nova Kakhovka, is occupied by the Russian army, which is attempting to establish a military government in the area. Novy Den's webpage has remained inaccessible for days. Earlier this month, on 1 March 2022, Oleh Baturin announced on his Facebook page that Russian forces had interfered with the access to the website of his media outlet, Novy Den. The Institute of Mass Information in Ukraine also reported that journalists in the Kherson region have been receiving calls with threats from unknown individuals who appear to be members of the Russian military.

Front Line Defenders expresses grave concerns about the disappearance of human rights defender and journalist Oleh Baturin and calls upon the Russian military to disclose if Oleh Baturin is in their custody. If this is confirmed, Front Line Defenders calls for the human rights defender's immediate release.

Front Line Defenders condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine and calls upon the international community to recognise the critical role being played by human rights defenders in documenting human rights violations and supporting their communities and to ensure that the necessary support is provided to ensure their protection.