

**DUBLIN**

Front Line Defenders – Head Office
First Floor, Avoca Court
Temple Road, Blackrock
Co. Dublin, A94 R7W3, Ireland

info@frontlinedefenders.org
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +353 1 212 3750
fax +353 1 233 8695

BRUSSELS

Front Line Defenders – EU Office
Square Marie-Louise 72
1000 Brussels
Belgium

euoffice@frontlinedefenders.org
www.frontlinedefenders.org

phone +32 2 230 9383
fax +32 2 230 0028

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Ukraine: Intimidation and smear campaign against woman human rights defender Daryna Dmytrievska

Since 10 March 2023 an intimidation campaign through a bombardment of messages via sms and social media, a practice known as sms bombing, was launched against Ukrainian woman human rights defender **Daryna Dmytrievska**. She has been targeted because of her social media post regarding gender based violence.

[Daryna Dmytrievska](#) is a Ukrainian family doctor and human rights defender whose work focuses on women's and LGBTI rights, access to healthcare, and non-discriminatory approaches in the healthcare system, in particular regarding transgender people. She also is the founder of the [NGO "Medical leaders"](#) which deals with the issues related to reform of the healthcare system of Ukraine. After the escalation of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022 she was evacuated abroad where she continues her human rights work.

On 8 March 2023, while still in Germany the woman human rights defender [posted](#) on her social media "if there were no men, who would protect you? - Protect from whom?" which she later explained as an attempt to illustrate the statistics of domestic and gender-based violence where the perpetrators are predominantly men. Daryna Dmytrievska reported that subsequently, a right-wing Ukrainian figure, with a large online following, drew the attention of his subscribers to her account. The ultra-right telegram-channel, "Катарсис" (Catharsis), also published personal information about the woman human rights defender, including her ID number, her address in Kyiv, her e-mail and phone number.

After the sms bombing¹ began, Daryna Dmytrievska has reported that several hundreds of accounts started texting her threats of rape and physical violence, and sending video and GIF-images of executions of people and sexual content to her e-mail and to her facebook and telegram accounts. The perpetrators claim she has insulted men in the Ukrainian army and they have spread a fake photo of another woman holding a poster with the words "Kill all men 2023", claiming that it is Daryna Dmytrievska.

Daryna Dmytrievska reported the threats to the Ukrainian cyber police but as of 14 March 2022, she has received [no information](#) on whether an official investigation was launched.

This is part of a wave of similar attack on women human rights defenders and other civil society activists in Ukraine.

Front Line Defenders condemns the intimidation, smear campaigns and doxing against Ukrainian woman human rights defenders as it believes that it is solely motivated by her peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Ukraine to:

¹ SMS bombing is the act of using malicious programs or tools to send a large number of unwanted SMS messages, and in this case also calls to one or more mobile numbers within a short period of time, thereby harassing users

1. Initiate and carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into this case and bring to justice those responsible for the doxing and coordinated intimidation campaign against Daryna Dmytrievska;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Daryna Dmytrievska as well as of the members of her family;
3. Ensure that women human rights defenders are recognised as an integral part of civil society and receive all the necessary protection;