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First UA: 17/25 Index: EUR 50/9057/2025 Ukraine of February 21, 2025

UKRAINE NURSERY TEACHER IMPRISONED BY RUSSIA

Olha Baranevska, a retired nursery teacher from Melitopol, refused to work under Russian occupation. In May 2024, authorities abducted her from her home and allegedly tortured her. A month later, they briefly released her, only to arrest her again. She was given two consecutive 14-day "administrative detentions" before being accused of hiding explosives in her garden.

She was sentenced to six years in prison. During this time, her elderly mother passed away, and her own health remains at risk.

Write to the Russian Human Rights Commissioner urging her to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Olha Baranevska unless there is credible evidence of a crime she can be plausibly suspected of. In that case, ensure that her right to a fair trial is fully respected.
- Pending her release, ensure she is protected from ill-treatment and given the healthcare she needs.
- Investigate the circumstances of her abduction, arbitrary detention, alleged torture, and the falsification of evidence. Ensure that those responsible for these human rights violations are held accountable in fair trials.

Write to:

Tatiana Moskalkova
Human Rights Commissioner
Smolensky Boulevard, 19c2
119121 Moscow, Russian Federation,
Email: [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)

Salutation: *Dear Human Rights Commissioner,*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Melitopol, a town in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, fell under Russian occupation in February 2022. While some residents fled, including Olha Baranevska's daughter, Olha stayed to care for her elderly mother. She shared video updates on Facebook in Ukrainian, describing life under occupation.

In her posts, she highlighted abuses, including a story about a colleague who faced harassment by Russian authorities. This included a home search, verbal abuse, and the destruction of personal items with Ukrainian symbols.

The nursery where Olha had worked reopened under Russian control. Authorities repeatedly pressured her to return, but she refused. Amnesty International has documented similar cases where Ukrainian teachers faced intimidation, violence, and forced labor to make them teach under the Russian curriculum.

Russia has also pursued policies aimed at altering the demographics of occupied areas, erasing Ukrainian identity and culture.

Olha, now 61, has diabetes and other health conditions requiring treatment. In 2023, she was forced to accept a Russian passport to access healthcare. While she has received insulin in detention, her other medical needs have been neglected, according to her daughter.

On her 85-year-old mother's birthday in November 2024, Olha learned of her passing, adding to her suffering.

Amnesty International has documented widespread human rights violations by Russian forces in Ukraine, including war crimes and possible crimes against humanity. These include abductions, enforced disappearances, torture, and unlawful imprisonment. In Russian-occupied areas, civilians routinely face mistreatment, unfair trials, and denial of medical care in custody.

Please take action as soon as possible until May 31, 2025! The UA will be duly updated should there be the need for further action.