

'Murdered' Ukraine Politician Faced Hostile Mob, Video Shows

By [The Moscow Times](#)

April 23, 2014



Horlivka city deputy Volodymyr Rybak (left) is manhandled by several men, among them a masked man in camouflage, outside a city hall building in Horlivka in this still image taken from video filmed by gorlovka.ua on April 17, 2014.

SLOVYANSK — The Ukrainian town councilor whose apparent torture and murder helped to prompt a threatened new government offensive in the east was mobbed by a hostile, pro-Russian crowd before he disappeared, a video of the incident shows.

The apparent murder of Volodymyr Rybak and a second man prompted the European Union to call on Russia to use its influence to stop kidnappings and killings in mainly Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine, the scene of separatist rebellions against Kiev's leaders.

The [footage](#) from April 17 on local news site gorlovka.ua shows angry scenes outside the town hall of Horlivka, between the separatist flashpoint cities of Donetsk and Sloviansk, as Rybak is manhandled by several men, among them a masked man in camouflage, while other people

hurl abuse.

Rybak had tried to remove the flag of the separatist Donetsk Republic, the website said. "Over my dead body will you take down that flag," one man in plain clothes yells at Rybak as the politician tries to gain entry to the town hall.

Two uniformed policemen appear in the video, though only one appears to intervene — ineffectually. After several minutes, Rybak appears able to walk away. Ukraine's interior ministry said he was seen being bundled into a car by masked men in camouflage later that day. His body was found on Saturday near Slovyansk.

He and another, unidentified, man appeared to have been tortured and dumped alive in a river to drown, police concluded.

Ukraine's acting president, Oleksandr Turchynov, who like Rybak is a member of the Fatherland Party led by former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, cited the murder as grounds for relaunching a so-far limited operation against militants who have taken over about a dozen towns and public buildings in the Russian-speaking east.

"Terrorists who have effectively taken the whole Donetsk region hostage, have crossed a line, starting to torture and murder Ukrainian patriots," Turchynov said Tuesday.

Kiev authorities acknowledged on Wednesday that a limited "anti-terrorist" operation had not yet resumed. But First Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Yarema said: "In the near future, appropriate measures will be taken and you will see results."

In Brussels, a spokesman for EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton pressed for all parties who attended four-way talks in Geneva last week to implement an accord that calls for moves to demilitarize the region and for occupied buildings to be vacated.

"We call ... in particular on Russia to use its leverage to ensure an immediate end to kidnappings and killings in eastern Ukraine," the spokesman said.

In Slovyansk near where Rybak's body was found, Yevhen Gorbik, a member of the local separatist "self-defense" force said: "Look guys, I know nothing ... It could be related with criminal affairs or political affairs."

"We do not need this," he said.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/04/23/murdered-ukraine-politician-faced-hostile-mob-video-shows-a34574>