

Ukrainian Lawmaker Plans to Sue Russian Police Over Detention at Nemtsov Rally

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A Ukrainian federal lawmaker who was detained in Moscow at a march in memory of slain opposition leader Boris Nemtsov said Monday that he plans to sue Russia's Interior Ministry.

Alexei Goncharenko, a member of Ukraine's parliament from the southern city of Odessa, said in a Facebook post that the Russian authorities have rescinded their claims against him, but he plans to sue them for allegedly beating him and not allowing him to see a doctor or his lawyer.

Goncharenko was initially detained for disobeying police orders at the march on Sunday, but upon questioning, authorities began considering charges against him for the attempted murder and torture of a Russian citizen during a pro-Russian protest in Odessa last year, the Interfax news agency reported.

But the claims were dropped, and Goncharenko was released from custody later Sunday.

A post on Goncharenko's Facebook page had denounced the accusations as "absurd."

Goncharenko told Kommersant FM news radio Monday that a police captain had beaten him near the monument to saints Cyril and Methodius in Moscow's central Kitai-Gorod neighborhood, where the march began. He said he planned to leave Moscow on Monday.

The head of Ukraine's delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Volodymyr Arieiev, called on Sunday for the release of both Goncharenko and another member of Ukraine's parliament, Nadezhda Savchenko, who is on hunger strike in a Moscow prison.

Savchenko, a former pilot in the Ukrainian military, was captured by pro-Russian rebels in eastern Ukraine last summer and taken to Moscow, where she faces prosecution for complicity in the death of two Russian journalists killed by mortar fire in June.

A number of Western leaders have called for her release, but to no avail. A Russian rights activist said last week that Savchenko, whose hunger strike is now in its third month, could die in days.

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