



HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER

# ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCES OF ACTIVE CITIZENS IN UKRAINE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE FULL-SCALE INVASION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION



## 1. General Statistics

The occupiers actively use terror against the active citizens in order **to intimidate and “encourage” cooperation**, as well as to suppress civil resistance in the temporarily occupied territories, create the illusion that Russian law enforcement agencies have control over the situation, and conduct trials of Ukrainian civilians accused of international terrorism, sabotage, and other actions directed against the occupation authorities.

ZMINA has documented **503 cases of enforced disappearances of active citizens**, including:

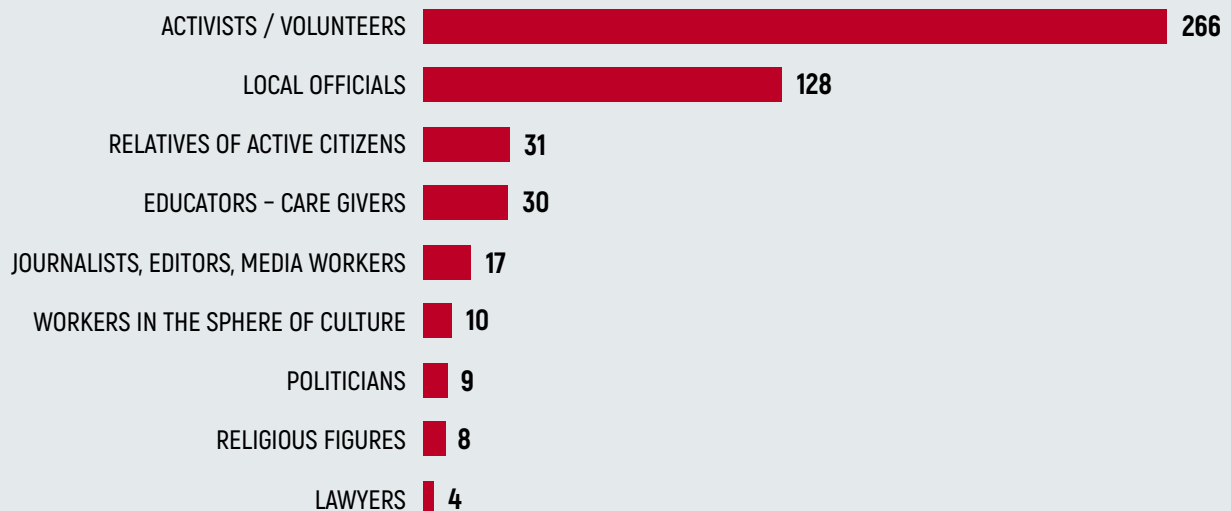
**286** PERSONS WHO ARE MISSED OR IN PLACES OF DETENTION

**201** PERSONS RELEASED

**16** PERSONS KILLED

ZMINA conducted **31 in-depth interviews** with civilians who have experienced enforced disappearances themselves or with family members of persons who have been abducted and held in places of detention.

### BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY:



Victims are both **men and women, youth, children, aged ones, and persons with chronic health troubles**:

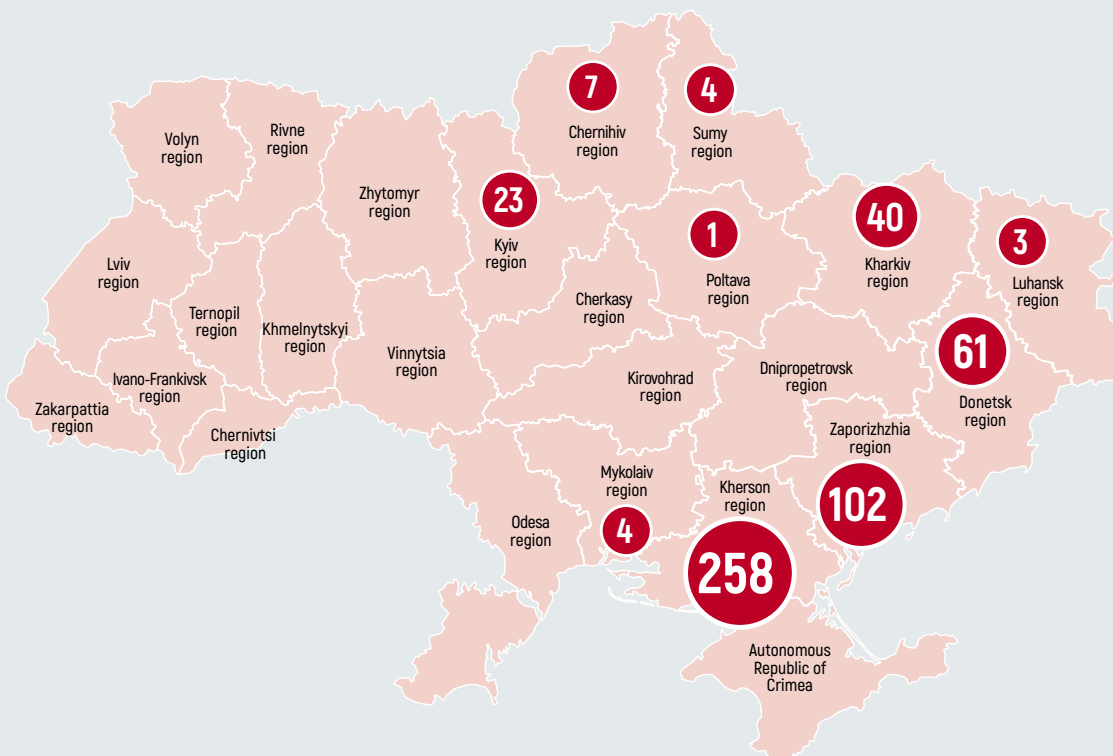
### BY GENDER:

- MEN – 407 persons
- WOMEN – 95 persons
- UNKNOWN – 1 person (child of a missed couple)

The occupiers abduct active citizens in the newly occupied territories from **peaceful meetings, volunteering, work, in the streets or roads, right from their homes.**



## BY REGIONS:



## ACTIVISTS FROM NATIONAL COMMUNITIES:

- CRIMEAN TATARS – 7 person
- BULGARIAN NATIONAL MINORITY – 1 person

## 2. Stories of people listed as missing in action (MIA)



### Mykola Masliy

(Kupyansk, Kharkiv region)

*deputy of the city council, public figure,  
veteran of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)*

Abducted on March 1, 2022. During the pro – Ukrainian protest, he went to negotiate with the Russian military; he wanted to convince them to leave Kupyansk. They started throwing stun grenades, shot and abducted **Mykola Masliy**. His whereabouts are still unknown.



## Serhiy Tsygipa

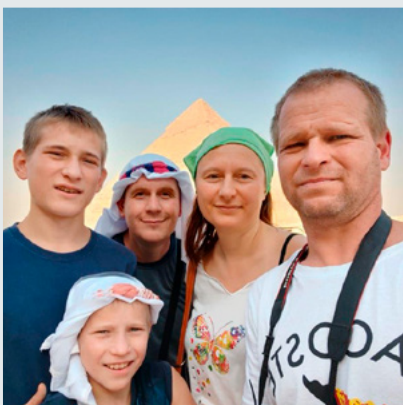
(Nova Kakhovka, Kherson Region)

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*public activist and journalist, head of the PO “Kakhovsky bridgehead”*

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Abducted on March 12, 2022. He went with his dog to the city of Tavriysk to carry his mother-in-law medicine and disappeared. The activist’s wife was informed that he was detained at the checkpoint by the Russian occupiers, and she found the dog tied up near the local executive committee. He is in the Simferopol pre-trial detention center, the occupation authorities charged him with espionage.



## Yevhen Guryanov

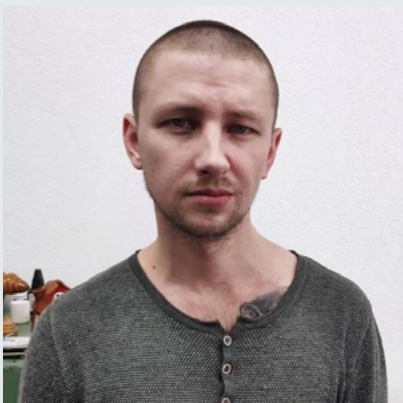
(Bucha, Kyiv region)

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*volunteer (humanitarian aid, evacuation of civilians)*

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Abducted from his own home on March 18, 2022. He was taken away by servicemen with “Armed Forces of the Russian Federation” chevrons. Yevhen’s whereabouts are still unknown (he may be in the Bryansk SIZO in Russia). CIZO – pre-trial detention center.



## Mykola Petrovskiy

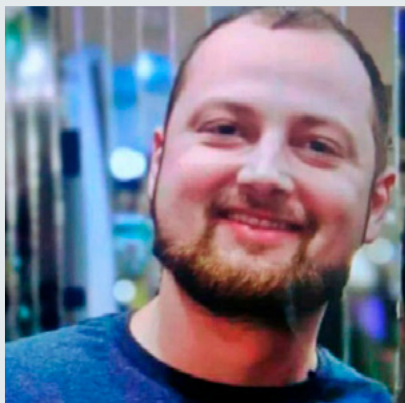
(Kherson)

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*volunteer (humanitarian aid, evacuation of civilians)*

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Volunteer from Kherson region. He has a disability on partially amputee leg due to an accident, but despite this, he continued to volunteer. The Russians Abducted **Mykola** on March 27, 2022 in the center of Kherson. He was kept in a basement for six months, and during the de-occupation of the city of Kherson, he was taken out of town and transferred to the Simferopol pre-trial detention center. **Mykola** was severely tortured in captivity, his fingers were broken, and his good leg and shoulder were severely wounded. His health condition is very poor.



## Yaroslav Zhuk

(Melitopol, Zaporizhzhia region)

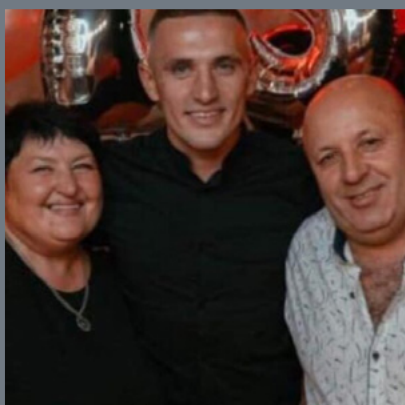
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***volunteer (humanitarian aid)***

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On June 17, 2022, Yaroslav was abducted near a supermarket in Melitopol and taken to an unknown house with a basement. There Yaroslav was tortured until August 8: severely beaten, electrocuted and burned his skin with a blowtorch. Under torture, he was forced to sign false confessions, and the Russians filmed his “confession” on video. At the moment, Yaroslav is being held in the Simferopol pre-trial detention center, he is accused of international terrorism.

## PEOPLE WHO WERE FOUND KILLED:



## The family of Sukhenko

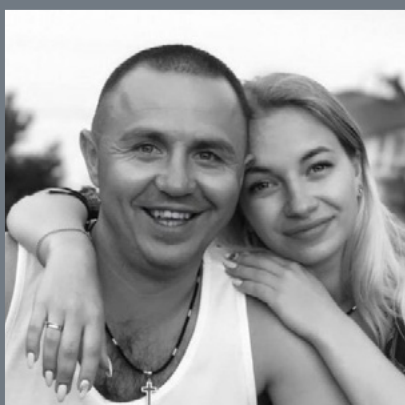
(Motyzhyn village, Kyiv region)

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***Olga Sukhenko – headman of Motyzhyn village, her husband Igor and son Oleksandr***

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Abducted on March 23, 2022. Both Olga and Oleksandr Sukhenko publicly stated their pro-Ukrainian position, and Oleksandr volunteered to help Motyzhyn residents while there. The invaders searched the house where the family of Sukhenko lived and stole their car. The second time they returned for Olga and Igor. Later, their son Oleksandr was also taken away. On April 2, 2022, after the de-occupation of the Kyiv region, the bodies of the Sukhenko family were found in one of the mass graves with signs of torture, in particular, Olga Sukhenko’s nails were torn out.



## Serhiy Kubrushko

(Irpin, Kyiv region)

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***volunteer (delivered food, medicine, helped with evacuation)***

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Abducted on March 23, 2022. At that moment, he was transporting humanitarian aid together with his son-in-law Andrey Shostak to Motyzhyn Village, Kyiv region. On April 4, 2022, he was found dead in a mass grave along with the bodies of the murdered head of the village of Motyzhyn, Olga Sukhenko and her family.



## Andriy Shostak

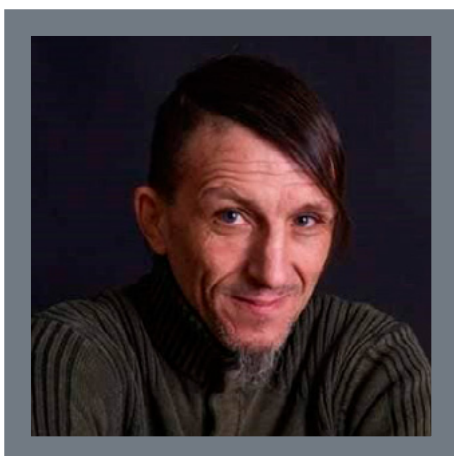
(Irpin, Kyiv Region)

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***volunteer (delivered food, medicine, helped with evacuation)***

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Abducted March 23, 2022. Then, together with his father-in-law Serhiy Kubrushko, he transported humanitarian aid to the village of Motyzhyn, Kyiv region. On April 11, 2022, he was found dead near a mass grave in the village of Motyzhyn.



## Volodymyr Vakulenko

(Kapytolivka village, Izyum district, Kharkiv region)

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***children's writer, public activist, ATO veteran***

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He was abducted from his own home in March 2022, and from that time until the de-occupation of Kharkiv region, there was no information about him. It was only known that Vakulenko decided not to leave occupied Izyum, because he took care of his son with a disability. On November 29, 2022, the family was informed that according to a DNA blood testing, Volodymyr's body was found in a mass grave in Izyum.

### 3. Mayors of Towns and Village Heads

Six cities' and villages' Heads currently remain in captivity. The seventh of them, Ivan Samoydyuk, deputy mayor of Energodar, Zaporizhzhia region, was dismissed on February 17, 2023.



## Evgeniy Matveyev

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***Mayor of Dniprorudne, Zaporizhzhia region***

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Abducted on March 13, 2022. He was detained at a Russian checkpoint (Matveyev's abandoned car remained there). Evgeniy's whereabouts are still unknown. Matveyev took a pro-Ukrainian position: on February 27, he went out to meet the Russian tanks, forcing them to turn back; he stated that he refused to cooperate with the invaders.



## Oleksandr Babych

*Mayor of Gola Prystan, Kherson region*

Abducted from his own home on March 28, 2022. The Russian military put him in a car and took him to the city administration, where 15 armed men were waiting for him. The Russians are holding Oleksandr Babych in pre-trial detention center No. 2 in Simferopol. As a consequence of a long day of torture, he is having health problems.



## Volodymyr Mykolayenko

*former mayor of Kherson (2014-2020)*

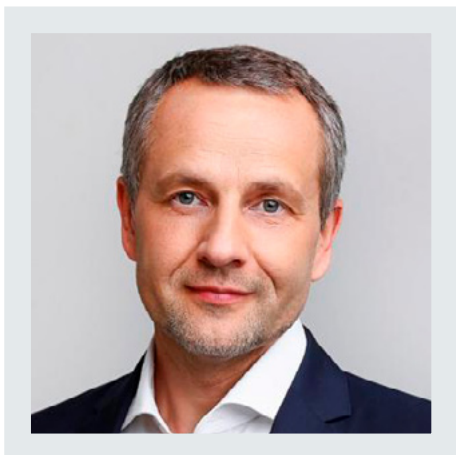
Abducted on April 18, 2022. He went to a meeting with a friend and never got in touch again. On July 27, his wife received official confirmation from the Russian side that he was “on the territory of the Russian Federation”. Volodymyr’s exact whereabouts are unknown. Earlier, Mykolayenko told the MOST correspondent that he received threats from collaborators.



## Serhiy Khilchenko

*The Chairman of the Krestovska community of Kherson region*

Abducted from work on June 28, 2022. The invaders took Serhiy Khilchenko to an unknown destination. His whereabouts are still unknown.



## Igor Kolykhayev

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### *Mayor of Kherson*

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Abducted from the job place on June 28, 2022. Rosgvardia soldiers and, probably, FSB officers conducted a search, put him on a bus and took him to an unknown destination. According to media reports, Kolykhayev was in a pre-trial detention center in Kherson. Then the mayor's son said that he was transferred to Chaplynka, Kherson region. Igor Kolykhayev's health condition has been worsened due to lack of food and water, and the Russians do not provide him with proper medical care.



## Dmytro Lyakhno

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### *The Chairman of Gornostayivka village, Kherson region*

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Abducted from his own home on August 3, 2022. The Russians cordoned off the block and brought armored personnel carriers; they searched the house (taking documents, money, phones, laptops, a purse, and a hunting rifle); they took him out into the yard in his underwear; they pulled a bag over his head; and they took him to an unknown destination. His whereabouts are still unknown (they could have been taken to Crimea together with volunteer Oleksandr Slyusarenko). Sometime before the abduction, Lyakhno refused to cooperate with the invaders.

## The main trends observed by ZMINA in the analysis of cases related to the enforced disappearance:

- Most of the enforced disappearances occurred in the **newly occupied territories**, the main goal is **to intimidate** local authorities and teachers and **“encourage” them for cooperation, or to create an illusion of complete control** over all civilians who, for various reasons, decided to stay in the newly occupied territories.
- Disappearances occur on:
  - ▶ **at the roadblocks** – this mainly applies to volunteers and activists, or people who have any signs of Ukrainian symbols (tattoos, yellow-blue clothing or camouflage);
  - ▶ **at home or at job places** – invaders come home or at the place of work to teachers, directors, activists, bloggers, conduct “searches”, seize personal belongings, take persons away.
  - ▶ **on the streets during the so-called “patrolling of the territory”** by quasi-law enforcement agencies of the occupation authorities.
- Information about the fate of a person: the occupiers provide relatives with **limited information** about where the person is being held, whether they were accused of committing any “crime”. This is an additional factor of pressure on the family and society.

## Recommendations for international partners:

1. Disseminate information and stories of victims of enforced disappearances.
2. Demand that **the Russian Federation** unconditionally release all victims of enforced disappearance.
3. Call on **the International Committee of the Red Cross** to take an active part in the search for civilian hostages, in particular to conduct regular visits to places of detention in the occupied territories and in Russia.
4. Support the **International Criminal Court and Ukrainian law enforcement agencies** to investigate enforced disappearances and punish those responsible.
5. Seek for **revision of the charters of international organizations** in order to establish a framework for limiting the abuse of the aggressor state by Russia.
6. Call on partner countries **to apply the principle of universal jurisdiction** – the possibility of bringing to justice those who committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in Ukraine.

