

UKRAINE : MEDIA SAFETY ADVISORY

Ukrainians are heading to the polls next Sunday 25 May to elect a new President, following the ousting of former President Viktor Yanukovich earlier this year. The election is taking place at a time where the country is still in the grip of a political crisis, with pro-Russia separatist groups controlling some parts in the east and organised an independence referendum in region of Donetsk.

These groups have clashed with anti-Russia protesters and journalists have been caught up in these incidents. There have also been a number of cases where journalists have been banned or detained by pro-Russian separatists or Ukrainian security forces.

The International Federation of Journalists has issued this media advisory, urging journalists and media staff who will be covering the Presidential election in Ukraine to exercise greater care for their safety.

It offers important tips to assist journalists in the following ways, including:

1. Preparing your trip:

- **Access:** The Ukrainian government has announced what it described as ‘ anti-terror ‘ military operations in the east of the country. Some parts are considered’ no access’ zones for media. Moreover, some towns in the east are surrounded by both government and separatist groups and access will be limited and difficult.

Journalists need to work out in advance areas they wish to visit and how to reach them.

Consider carrying protective gear and medical kit , at least first aid, in case of riots and illness.

2. Media Accreditation

- ***The Issuing authority:*** Some journalists have had to request permission to work from pro- Russia groups in eastern Ukraine.

Journalists should find out the accrediting authority in areas which they wish to cover.

3. At the Scene

- **Ensure Visibility:** Always carry press identification but conceal it if it attracts unwelcome attention. In tense situations, keep a low profile and consider leaving the area when under threat.

4. On Site Reporting

- **Avoid reporting close to angry crowds:** People may react angrily to a story such as the result (final or projection) of the vote, raising the risks to the journalist' safety.

Always consider sending a live report on sensitive story from a secure distance or area.

5. In Case of Arrest

Avoid confrontation: Always pay attention to the behavior and mood of those making the arrest before engaging them in a discussion.

In any case, remain polite at all times, state that you are a journalist and keep your credentials with you.

For more on IFJ Safety Guidelines, please visit <http://ifj-safety.org/en/contents/international-code-of-practice-for-the-safe-conduct-of-journalism>

6. Emergency Contacts

Journalists working in Ukraine and needing urgent assistance are encouraged to contact:

- **The International Committee of the Red Cross**

24-hour Hotline on +41 79 217 32 84; or +41 79 217 32 85

Email: press@icrc.org

Hotline website: <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/publication/p0394.htm>

Crisis Centre for All-Ukraine Trade Union "Independent Media Trade Union of Ukraine (IMTUU) & National Union of Journalists of Ukraine – NUJU

Executive Secretary, Oksana Vynnychuk, on +38 50 356 57 58, or at vynnychuk@ukr.net

- **The Russia Union of Journalists (RUJ)**

Secretary, Pavel Gutiontov, on +7 916 903 0787, or at gutiontov@mail.ru

International Secretary, Nadia Azhgikhina, on +7 916 212 43 07, or at azh@ruj.ru

7. IFJ International Safety Fund

- If you are a journalist in need of financial assistance for immediate medical, legal or security expenses, you can apply for the **IFJ Safety Fund**. The Safety Fund was set up to provide a lifeline to colleagues around the world who experience violence, threats and injury as a result of the work they do, ensuring help is at hand when most needed.

To apply, please visit the IFJ Safety Website on <http://ifj-safety.org/en/contents/ifj-international-safety-fund> or contact Ernest Sagaga, IFJ Head of Human Rights & Safety, on 0032 2 235 2207.