

NEWS DIGEST OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION APRIL 8-10, 2022

Efforts to return home the civilians illegally detained on Ukrainian territory continue. Since February 24, the Ukrainian Armed Forces have held the crew of the civilian ship “Azov Concord” in the port of Mariupol – the exit to the sea was mined, and the sailors were deprived of their phones, laptops, and documents. The High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation appealed to the Russian Ministry of Defense, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ukrainian side regarding their release, and was in constant contact with the sailors’ families. The work yielded positive results – on April 9, 14 sailors were released and evacuated to safety by Russian soldiers.

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Another exchange of Russian and Ukrainian POWs took place on April 9. Among those who returned home were servicemen of the Russian Federation and four employees of the “Rosatom” corporation. The Russian specialists were supposed to return home on March 16, but it turned out that they were being detained by armed personnel. After a series of negotiations with the Ukrainian side, a date was set for a Russian-Ukrainian exchange of detainees.

However, at the last minute, “Rosatom” employees were excluded from the exchange list by the Ukrainian side. The causes for this were clarified, and new formats for resolving the issue of the exchange were sought. The Ombudswoman and the leadership of the Russian authorities did everything possible to conclude the dialogue and free the citizens. On April 9, “Rosatom” employees have already returned home – after they recover, they will return to work.

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An exchange of long-distance truckers took place with the participation of the High Commissioner's Institute. 32 Russian and 20 Ukrainian drivers, as well as a number of citizens of Belarus, returned to their homes.

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On April 10, the Commissioner for Human Rights in the Samara Region, Olga Galtsova, visited wounded Russian soldiers in one of the Samara hospitals. Olga Galtsova also assisted the mother of one of the wounded citizens, by facilitating her transfer from Crimea to Samara, thus enabling her to visit her son.

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- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation