



UKRAINE

**Even among high dignitaries in Ukraine:
The Office of the Prosecutor General and
the State Bureau of Investigation allow
themselves to say that they seized a terrorist
or a murderer even before the court's
decision**

Fair Trials in Ukraine



Radio-Interview with Anastasya Alekseyeva
Coordinator of the ISHR court monitoring project

Interview to Hromadske radio:

Why is it important to remember the presumption of innocence and how to deal with the spread of misinformation in the media during trial coverage?

Litigation is an important part of journalistic work. Even if your media does not specialize in trials, but as soon as a high-profile case happens, everyone follows



it. What are the problems in the interaction of the media and the judicial system? You, as readers and listeners, might have noticed how different media call the same person involved in a case either a suspect, an accused, or even outright a criminal, a murderer, a corrupt official.

Why is it important to remember the presumption of innocence?

As part of our partnership with the Fourth National Forum “Independent Courts and Free Media: Countering Disinformation”, we are talking about a study by the International Society for Human Rights on inciting hatred and misinformation in the media in the judicial sphere.

Anastasia Alekseyeva, coordinator of the monitoring group of the International Society for Human Rights, says that the organization has been monitoring the observance of the right to a fair trial in Ukraine since 2017. In 2019, disinformation research was also added.

Unfortunately, the problem with the use of incorrect terminology concerns not only the lack of awareness among journalists in the legal field. State agencies are also making mistakes (or do it on purpose).

‘There are situations when the Office of the Attorney General or the State Bureau of Investigation declares that they have captured a terrorist, traitor, murderer, immediately accusing the person of committing a crime. But we have the benefit of the doubt. And the only body that can declare guilt is the court. Statements of government agencies form public opinion. Therefore, often, when the court, having considered the case, declares innocence, no one



believes the court anymore”.

Anastasia Alekseyeva draws attention to the fact that such government agencies have their own pages on social networks, their own press services, through which, like the media, they are able to influence the public opinion.

Of course, the expert says, there are problems in communication between the court and the media, caused not only by the media. But she calls to establish this communication.

The report notes that in order to create interesting content, the media use provocative headlines, personal information of participants in the trial, and highlight certain procedural moments out of context.

“A lot of negative information is also poured on judges, thanks to people who know how to use the media to create a negative impression of judges. Especially when it turns out that the information is false, and the judge against whom the bullying was directed suffers. There is information that should not be available, that cannot be operated on, because we are talking about honor and dignity”.

In 2019, the High Council of Justice received about 350 complaints regarding interference in legal proceedings, including pressure from the media. There is also a problem with awareness among journalists, says Anastasia Alekseyeva.

The International Society for Human Rights (ISHR) includes 33 national sections and groups operating in Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia and America. The human rights work of the ISHR covers more than 90 countries of the world.



Anastasia Alekseyeva calls on the editors to contact the International Society for Human Rights with proposals for partnerships in the field of educational projects to raise awareness of journalists in the judicial sphere.

Let's summarize: a person becomes a suspect in a case when a suspicion is handed over to him or her; the accused when the accusation is read out in court; a criminal, guilty, terrorist - only after a court decision.

Government agencies can use hate speech to shape the image of the enemy, this can be part of their propaganda. The media, however, should be critical of even the information presented by the press services.

It is necessary to expose the facts of corruption among judges, attend hearings and document violations during the trials. But in your exposing activities, it is important not to cross the line. After all, getting the dirty linen of someone from the participants in the trial to discredit them is no longer journalism.

Original

interview: https://hromadske.radio/podcasts/dno/koly-heneral-na-prokuratura-chy-dbr-zaiavliaiut-shcho-skhoplyly-terorysta-chy-vbyvtsiu-to-potim-nikhto-ne-viryt-rishenniu-sudu-anastasiia-aleksieieva?fbclid=IwAR318XtFTgtUgoIHwViPAfKz-5LLDcqquau9bFEQru_01rQyasLVcFUfALyU

The ISHR-Fair-Trials Monitoring Project is supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.