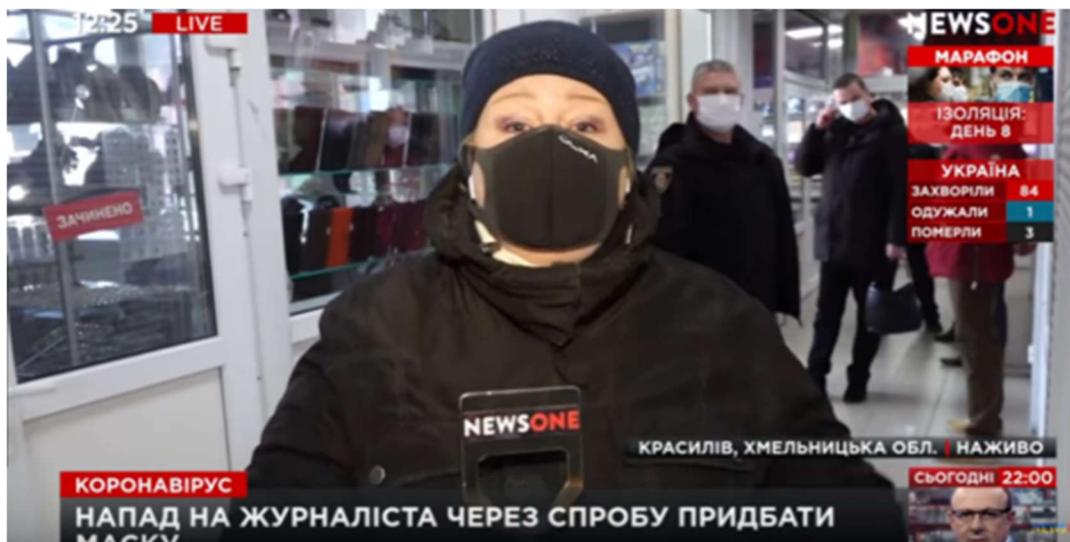


Ukraine: Journalist Attacked While Investigating Sale of Protective Masks

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<https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/ukraine-journalist-attacked-while-investigating-sale-of-protective-masks.html>

TV channel NewsOne journalist Tetiana Sivokon was physically attacked on 24 March by a shop owner while shooting a story about the sale of protective medical masks. The International and European Federation of Journalists (IFJ and EFJ) recall the press freedom right of covering news on Covid-19.



Credit: Screenshot NewsOne

Ukraine is experiencing masks shortage during the coronavirus pandemic. While preparing a report on this topic, NewsOne TV crew was informed by locals that the owner of a drug store in the Khmelnytsky region had several large boxes with medical masks.

The targeted journalist Tetiana Sivokon explained: “*We went to this shop, saw the announcement that masks are in stock. I politely introduced myself and asked if I could buy masks. Seeing the camera, the man began to pull the masks pack from my hands. He said that masks are not for sale, that they are for employees only*”.

“*After I informed that I had called the police, the man walked around and attacked me from behind, started to wring my hand and twist my fingers to snatch the masks from my hands. He also damaged microphone*”, she added.

Doctors diagnosed the journalist with severely ligament damage and put a cast on her hand. The National Police of Ukraine recorded the injury and started an investigation into the incident.

The National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (NUJU) is outraged at this obstruction of journalistic activity: *“In Ukraine, the level of physical aggression against journalists is usually high, and obviously the current situation is making their work even more complicated. Attacks on media workers during the coverage of the coronavirus epidemic are totally unacceptable”*, the President of the NUJU Sergiy Tomilenko emphasized.

“Together with doctors and health care workers, law enforcement officers and rescuers, journalists are at the forefront of the fight against the coronavirus. Journalists cannot go into self-isolation because they do an important public mission. They promptly and objectively inform citizens about an emergency caused by an epidemic. Reporters nowadays are consciously risking their own health. Law enforcement and government must strongly respond to attacks on media workers”.