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On March 23, the Russian military occupying Kherson abducted and transported away, in an unknown direction, Oleksandr Knyha, the art director of the Kherson Theatre named after Mykola Kulish. Oleksandr Kniga is a world-famous theatrical figure, chairman of the Eurasian Theatre Association, president of the Melpomene Tavria International Theatre Festival and a member of the Kherson Regional Council.

The Russian occupiers conducted searches in the premises of the Kherson Theatre. In real danger now is the theatre's head director, Serhiy Pavlyuk, who has been taking part in the anti-occupation rallies within the city, while Oleksandr Knyha's wife, Oksana, is being threatened by Russians with unlawful arrest. A day earlier, they already detained, at a pro-Ukrainian street rally, Viktor Havrilyuk, the artistic director of the Kherson Academic Regional Puppet Theatre.

We call on the whole world's theatre community to join in our demands to liberate Ukrainian artist Oleksandr Knyha. We need to make known the horrid acts of violence and repression unleashed by the Russian military against the Ukrainian culture figures and do everything possible and impossible to ensure their freedom.

The world must be aware of these war crimes!

Bogdan Strutynskyi
Chairman of the National Union
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