

Kiev mayor at loss when confronted about Ukrainian human rights abuses in interview

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The 10-minute interview for the Reality Check program touched upon several hot issues, including Klitschko's alleged ties with a Ukrainian crime boss during his boxing career, the government's failure to tackle corruption and the political crisis. Prime Minister Arseny Yatsenyuk survived a no-confidence vote after President Petro Poroshenko had called for his resignation, partially thanks to dozens of MPs in Poroshenko's own faction voting for the PM to keep his job.

However, it was the human rights abuses committed by pro-Kiev troops such as the infamous Azov voluntary battalion, reported by international organizations including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International and many Western media outlets, which apparently gave Klitschko a hard time.

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"It's not true. It's propaganda war," he replied when Hasan cited reports that Azov soldiers openly wore Nazi symbols.

Klitschko, who is not known as a brilliant speaker, was speaking English, which may have contributed to his

confusion.

"I doesn't see swastika," he continued. "I talked to the people. We defend our territory."

The host challenged this by pointing out that defending oneself does not justify abductions and torture, reportedly committed by Azov troops. Klitschko denied the allegations, saying that as a person living in Ukraine he knows better.

"I don't know from what you take this information. I'm sorry, I come from Ukraine," he said.

Hasan asked Klitschko to clarify whether he rejects reports by Amnesty and HRW, to which he said *"I don't have any information."*

Kiev's mayor has made his fair share of gaffes and blunders during interviews in the past, sometimes making really puzzling statements. On one occasion, while describing the red tape in the government, he said: *"I have two deputies, four of whom have been lying in the Cabinet and cannot be appointed."* In another interview he was asked how the country could be kept united? He replied: *"I met many police officers, who died, to people and demonstrators, who died, and they all ask this question."*