



# CRIMEAN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP

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## CRIMEAN HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION REVIEW

**AUGUST 2021**

The monitoring review was prepared by the Crimean Human Rights Group on the basis of materials collected in August 2021

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# 1 | INTRODUCTION

The **Crimean Human Rights Group (CHRG)** is an organization of the Crimean human rights defenders and journalists, the purpose of which is to promote the observance and protection of human rights in Crimea by attracting widespread attention to the problems of human rights and international humanitarian law observance in the territory of the Crimean peninsula, as well as the search and development of mechanisms to protect the human rights in Crimea.

The **CHRG** first of all obey the rules of basic documents in the field of human rights, such as: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Helsinki Final Act, the Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on economic, social and cultural rights and others.

The main objectives of the **CHRG**:

- 1) Collection and analysis of the information regarding the human rights situation in Crimea;
- 2) Broad awareness among governments, international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, the media and other target groups through the publication and spreading of analytical and information materials on the human rights situation in Crimea;
- 3) Promote the protection of human rights and respect for international law in Crimea;
- 4) Preparation of recommendations for government authorities and international organizations in the sphere of human rights;
- 5) Providing the presence of “human rights in the Crimea topics” in the information space.

The **CHRG's** team consists of experts, human rights activists and journalists from different countries who are involved in monitoring and documenting human rights violations in Crimea, since February, 2014.

During preparation and spreading of the information the **CHRG** is guided by principles of objectivity, reliability and timeliness.

# 2

## CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS

### RIGHT TO LIBERTY AND SECURITY OF THE PERSON

#### SEARCHES AND DETENTIONS

On August 5, activist **Ms. Ludvika Papadopulu** from Yalta was detained at the Russian authorities' controlled checkpoint on the administrative border with Crimea in Armiansk. She was informed that a criminal case had been opened against her under RF Criminal Code Art. 128.1 (*Slander*), and she was wanted for publication on a social network reporting the corruption in the «administration» of Yalta. The activist was taken to the «Main Directorate of the Investigative Committee» in Simferopol.<sup>1</sup> On August 6, Andrey Dolgopulov, a judge of the 'Kievsky District Court of Simferopol', put her on house arrest as a pre-trial restriction until September 5, 2021.<sup>2</sup>

On August 5, the homes of members of the **Jehovah's Witnesses** religious organization were searched at mass scale in Armiansk (*for more details, see the Persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses section*).

On August 17, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, the Center for Countering Extremism of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation («Center E»), and the special police forces conducted mass searches in the houses of **Muslims and Crimean Tatars**. After the searches, 5 people were detained (*for more details, see the section «The Case of Crimean Muslims»*).

### POLITICALLY MOTIVATED CRIMINAL PROSECUTION

As at the end of August **118** persons were deprived of liberty due to politically reasoned and/or religious criminal persecution. The full list has been published at the CHRГ website.<sup>3</sup> **9** persons more are on house arrest.

#### “CASE OF CRIMEAN MUSLIMS”

This case defendants are accused of membership in Muslim religious organizations<sup>4</sup> or propaganda of activities of the organizations that are declared terrorist or extremist in the RF though they are not according to the Ukrainian laws. Cases are considered in violation of the right to a fair trial, the main evidence for the court is the testimony of anonymous witnesses (many of whom are RF FSB men), pre-trial testimony of witnesses who later declare in court that such testimony was given under duress, and linguistic examinations of conversations of the accused Muslims. The evidence provided by the defense is usually not accepted by the judges.

In August the total number of Crimean residents deprived of liberty under the 'Case of Crimean Muslims' was **79 persons**, and **5 more people** are under the movement restriction: **3** are subject to supervision, and are not allowed to leave the occupied territory, and **2** are on house arrest.

On August 13, Timur Mashukov, Judge of the Southern Area Military Court (YuOVS),

<sup>1</sup> CHRГ / Liudvika Papadopulu, Activist from Yalta, Detained in Crimea <https://crimeahrg.org/ru/v-krymu-zaderzhali-yaltinskuyu-aktivistku-lyudviku-papadopulu/>

<sup>2</sup> CHRГ / Liudvika Papadopulu, Activist from Yalta, Put on House Arrest till September 5 <https://crimeahrg.org/ru/aktivistku-iz-yalty-lyudoviku-papadopulu-zaklyuchili-pod-domashnij-arest-do-5-sentyabrya/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://crimeahrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/prisoners\\_08\\_2021.pdf](https://crimeahrg.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/prisoners_08_2021.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> In most cases this organization is 'Hizb-ut-Tahrir'



extended the detention period of **Zekirya Muratov** until November 17, 2021.<sup>5</sup>

On August 16, Roman Saprunov, Judge of the Southern Area Military Court (YuOVS), sentenced the defendants of the «Alushta Group» within «The Case of Crimean Muslims»:

- **Eldar Kantimirov** to 12 years of the maximum security regime penal colony with a one year's restriction of freedom,
- **Ruslan Nagayev** — to 13 years of the maximum security regime penal colony with a one year's restriction of freedom,
- **Lenur Khalilov** — to 18 years of the maximum security regime penal colony with a one year's restriction of freedom,
- **Ruslan Mesutov** — of the maximum security regime penal colony with a one year's restriction of freedom.

On August 17, the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation, Center E, the special police forces conducted mass searches in the houses of Muslims and Crimean Tatars: in the house of local imam **Raif Fevziyev** in the village of Stroganovka, Simferopolsky District, at **Dzhabbar Bekirov's**, in the village of Ternovka, Balaklava district, at **Zavur Abdullayev's** in the village of Kholmovka, Bakhchisaraskyi District, at **Rustem Murasov's and Rustem Tairov's** in the village of Povorotnoye, Nakhimovsky District.

Raif Fevziyev and Dzhabbar Bekirov are suspected under RF CC Article 205.5-1 (*Organization of the activities of a terrorist organization*), the rest — RF CC Article 205.5-2 (*Participation in the activities of a terrorist organization*). After the searches, they all were detained.<sup>6</sup>

On August 17 and 18, the «judges» remanded all the detainees in custody. The «Kievsky District Court of Simferopol» decided to detain

Raif Fevziyev until October 12, 2021,<sup>7</sup> all the rest were taken into custody by the decision of the «Leninsky District Court of Sevastopol» until October 11, 2021.<sup>8</sup>

On August 18, Roman Saprunov, a YuOVS judge, extended the detention periods of **Lenur Seydametov** and **Timur Yalkabov** until January 26, 2022.<sup>9</sup>

On August 18, Oleg Yegorov, a judge of the Military Court of Appeal in Vlasikha (RF), upheld the decision to detain **Rustem Seytmemetov, Osman Seytumerov, Seytumer Seytumerov** until October 22, 2021.<sup>10</sup>

On August 24, Oleg Volkov, a YuOVS judge, extended the detention period of **Raim Aivazov, Farhod Bazarov, Remzi Bekirov, Riza Izetov and Shaban Umerov** until December 16, 2021.<sup>11</sup>

### “UKRAINIAN SABOTEURS’ CASE”

At the end of August 2021, **17 people** who were accused by the RF FBS during the detention “of preparing subversions, possession of weapons and espionage”, were in custody. These cases feature recorded facts of unlawful investigation methods, torturing to get confessions, violation of presumption of innocence, dissemination of ‘confession’ videos by the RF FSB via the Russian mass media.

Journalist Vladyslav Yesypenko is still kept in the Simferopol Pre-trial Detention Center waiting for further court hearings in his case. The CHRG has information about the torture the journalist was subject to after the arrest that he described: *«in about 10 minutes, the van entered the gate and parked in front of a building of some kind. The FSB officers took me into the building's basement and started undressing me. I resisted, but since there were several of them*

<sup>5</sup> Crimean Solidarity / Zekirya Muratov, a Disabled Political Prisoner, Contracted COVID 19 in Pre-Trial Detention Centre. The Court Kept Him in Custody <https://crimean-solidarity.org/news/2021/08/13/polituznik-s-invalidnostyu-zekirya-muratov-zarazilsya-covid-v-sizo-sud-ostavil-ego-pod-strazhej-1463>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/crimeansolidarity/posts/1474311312936320>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/crimeansolidarity/posts/1475287792838672>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/crimeansolidarity/posts/1475297399504378>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/crimeansolidarity/posts/1475873852780066>

<sup>10</sup> Military Court of Appeal / Case 55K-288/2021 [https://vap.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&H\\_date=18.08.2021](https://vap.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&H_date=18.08.2021)

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/crimeansolidarity/posts/1479491549084963>



*and I was handcuffed, they managed to strip me naked and put me on the concrete floor. Then I had wires with loops put over my ears, through which they applied some voltage. The pain was unbearable, so I began breaking away and screaming. But the FSB officers held me against the floor and went on to electrocute me through my head for about another five minutes.*

*In between the tortures, I was questioned about the purpose of coming to Crimea, what and where I was filming, and whether I was a Security Service of Ukraine's agent or employee. I replied that I worked as a journalist for Radio Svoboda (the Krym.Realii Project) and that I had nothing to do with the Ukrainian special services. These answers did not satisfy the FSB officers, so they put me on the floor again, put wires over my ears and proceeded to torture me by applying voltage to the wires...».*

Within considering the case of Konstantin Shiring on the merits — charged under RF CC Article 276 «Espionage» — 6 sessions were held in the 'Supreme Court of Republic of Crimea' in August.

### PERSECUTION FOR CHARGING WITH BEING IN N.CHELEBIDJIKHAN BATTALION

As of the end of August, **6 people** were deprived of liberty under a charge of being in N.Chelebidjikhkan battalion. The official reason for persecuting the accused in Crimea under RF CC Article 208-2 is that they failed to come voluntarily to the RF law enforcement bodies and declare their participation in the Crimean Tatar Noman Chelebidjikhkan Volunteer Battalion. The evidence of the battalion actions against the RF interests declared by the investigation is the information of mass media that the purpose of the battalion establishment was to de-occupy Crimea.

### PERSECUTION OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

As of end of August, **4 persons** were deprived of liberty within the persecution of the 'Jehovah's Witnesses' in Crimea. **8 more people** were under the movement restriction — **6** were on house arrest, and **2** was under travel restrictions.

According to the website of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia, on August 2, RF FSB investigator Vitaliy Vlasov opened a criminal case against **Alexander Litviniuk and Alexander Dubovenko** under RF CC Article 282.2 (*Organization of the activities of an extremist organization*). The reason was a video conference held at Zoom.

On August 5, in Armiansk, RF FSB men conducted 8 searches among Jehovah's Witnesses followers. Alexander Litviniuk was taken to Simferopol after the search. On August 6, Andrey Dolgopolov, a judge of the 'Kievskiy District Court of Simferopol', put him on house arrest as a pre-trial restriction until October 1, 2021. Alexander Dubovenko was not at home during the search. He was detained on August 9, and his house was searched again. On the same day, Yevgeniy Pronin, a judge of the 'Kievskiy District Court of Simferopol', put him on house arrest as a pre-trial restriction until October 2, 2021.<sup>12</sup>

On August 10, the 'Sevastopol City Court' upheld the verdict against **Viktor Stashevskiy** (6 years and 6 months in the general regime penal colony).<sup>13</sup> He was sentenced under RF CC Article 282.2-1. The appeal was considered by «judge» Vasily Avkhimov.<sup>14</sup>

The Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia website reported that two more defendants were involved in the case of Taras Kuzio, who is under house arrest — Yalta residents Sergey Liutin, held now in the Simferopol Pre-Trial Detention Center,<sup>15</sup> and **Tadevos Manukyan** (information on his pre-trial restriction is under verification).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia / Case of Dubovenko and Litviniuk in Armiansk <https://jw-russia.org/cases/armyansk.html>

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia / The Third Jehovah's Witness from Crimea Will Go to Penal Colony for Faith. The Court of Appeal Approved a Severe Verdict of Viktor Stashevskiy <https://jw-russia.org/news/2021/08/111039.html>

<sup>14</sup> «Sevastopol City Court» / Case22-593,2021 [https://gs--sev.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&H\\_date=10.08.2021](https://gs--sev.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&H_date=10.08.2021)

<sup>15</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia / Liulin Sergey <https://jw-russia.org/prisoners/lyulin.html>

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia / Manukian Tadevos <https://jw-russia.org/prisoners/manukyan.html>



The CHRГ has been informed that their homes were searched within the persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yalta: Tadevos Manukyan's in March 2019, and Sergey Liulin's in March 2021. Sergey Liulin was detained on August 10, 2021, and on August 13, the «Kievsky District Court» of Simferopol remanded him in custody until September 4.<sup>17</sup>

On August 16, in Yevpatoria, a home of local local resident, whose name is still being identified was searched due to the decision of Yevgeniy Pronin, "judge of the Kievsky District Court of Simferopol". According to investigators, Jehovah's Witnesses followers discussed the Bible in this apartment. At the end of the search, the security force men stated that the call had been false and left the apartment.<sup>18</sup>

## CONFINEMENT CONDITIONS IN CUSTODIAL SETTING

On August 13, lawyer E. Avamilyova reported that the defendant in the «case of the Crimean Muslims» **Zekirya Muratov**, who is being held in the Pre-Trial Detention Center no 1 in Rostov-na-Donu (RF), was diagnosed with bilateral pneumonia and coronavirus.<sup>19</sup>

## FREEDOM OF THOUGHT, CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION

On August 8, Center E men interrupted the service at the **Monastery of St. Dmitry of Thessalonica of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU)** claiming that the ceremony was held in a room that was not registered as a religious building under Russian law. Vladimir Gorevanov, Center E Major, drew up a report on **Archimandrite Damian (Pavel Skokov)** under RF CoAO Article 5.26 (*Illegal missionary activity*).<sup>20</sup> On August 23, Stanislav Novikov, "justice of the peace", fined Archimandrite Damian RUR 15,000 rubles under RF CoAO Article 5.26-4.<sup>21</sup> The occupation authorities reject registering the OCU in Crimea as religious organizations, so any OCU service is an official reason for persecution under RF CoAO Article 5.26.

The CHRГ recorded 3 more new administrative proceedings under RF CoAO Art. 5.26, sent to the "courts" of Crimea for consideration. All three cases were opened against the «Church of Christians of the Evangelical Faith» (CCEF), including CCEF «**Good News**», the CCEF of Pentecostals «**New Life**» and **Edgar Babayan**, the head of the «Christians of the Evangelical Faith of the Town of Yalta».

In total, at the end of August, the CHRГ recorded 132 cases under RF CoAO Article 5.26, sent to the "courts" of Crimea. The total amount of fines under these cases is **RUR1,743,500**.

<sup>17</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia Case of Kuzio and Others in Yalta <https://jw-russia.org/cases/yalta2.html#20210816>

<sup>18</sup> Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia / Case of Kuzio and Others in Yalta <https://jw-russia.org/cases/yalta2.html#20210816>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/crimeansolidarity/posts/1472010899833028>

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/yevstr/posts/4212332305481688>

<sup>21</sup> «Justices of Peace of Republic of Crimea» / Case 05-0350/32/2021 <http://mirsud82.rk.gov.ru/>



## FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

On August 5, Yalta activist **Ludvika Papadopulu** was detained for posting on a social network that criticized the de facto authorities. On August 6, she was put on house arrest (*for more details, see the Searches and Detentions section*).

On August 23, in Armiansk, Anatoly Muravlev, Russian police lieutenant colonel, forbade journalists to interview lawyer Nikolay Polozov after a scheduled session on the case of Mustafa Dzhemilev, the leader of the Crimean Tatar people. Muravlev said that a counter-terrorist operation had been started in Armiansk and any filming was prohibited. However, he refused to provide documents confirming his words.<sup>22</sup>

## FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION

On August 2, Oksana Shidakova, ‘judge of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Crimea’, upheld the decision on a fine of RUR10,000 rubles against **Emine Abdulganiyeva** for holding a single person protest in support of her son of Eskander Abdulganiyev, a defendant in the case of «Crimean Muslims».<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/nikolay.polofov/posts/4362932097105486>

<sup>23</sup> «SCRC» / Case 12-422/2021 [https://vs--krm.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&H\\_date=02.08.2021](https://vs--krm.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&H_date=02.08.2021)



# 3 | VIOLATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

## GENEVA CONVENTION (IV) RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIAN

### CONSCRIPTION OF PERSONS LIVING IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY INTO ARMED FORCES OF OCCUPYING POWER AND PROPAGANDA OF JOINING

In August the CHRГ recorded **14** new criminal cases against the Crimean residents under RF CC Article 328 (*Evading the service in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation*) and **10** new sentences issued under RF CC Article 328. Totally, as of the end of August 2021, the CHRГ documented **258** criminal cases initiated for evading the RF Army military service, that were sent to the Crimean 'courts' for considering, with verdicts delivered for **232** of them and **26** being still under consideration.

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