

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS INCARCERATED IN CRIMEA

**Prominent human rights lawyer in Crimea Emil Kurbedinov was sentenced to 10 days' administrative detention on 26 January. He is being targeted for his human rights work and should be immediately released.**

Prominent human rights lawyer **Emil Kurbedinov** was sentenced on 26 January to 10 days' "administrative detention" by the Zheleznodorozhny Distric Court, in Simferopol, the capital of Crimea. He is currently being held in a temporary detention facility in Simferopol. Since the occupation and annexation of the Crimean peninsula by Russia in February-March 2014, ethnic Crimean Tatars have borne the brunt of the intense repression of opposing voices that followed it. Emil Kurbedinov has been drawing international attention to human rights violation in Crimea and has been acting as defence lawyer of Crimean Tatars targeted by the de facto and the Russian authorities.

On 26 January Emil Kurbedinov and a colleague were driving to the home a Crimean Tatar activist which was being searched by law enforcement officials. Their car was stopped by traffic police and soon after, a group of masked men in civilian clothes claiming to be policemen arrived and detained Emil Kurbedinov. On the same day, armed masked officers belonging to the Russian Ministry of the Interior searched Emil Kurbedinov's home and office and seized equipment containing information protected by lawyer-client confidentiality. Emil Kurbedinov's mother and young children were in the house at the time of the search.

In the afternoon of 26 January Emil Kurbedinov was brought before a court and found guilty under Article 20.3 of Russia's Code of Administrative Offences (propaganda and public display of Nazi and extremist symbols). The relevant administrative charge against him relates to a social media post in which Emil Kurbedinov shared a video of a meeting of the Muslim organization Hizb ut-Tahrir in Crimea. In Russia, Hizb ut-Tahrir is officially listed as a "terrorist organisation". However, the post dates back to 5 June 2013, which predates Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea. Hizb ut-Tahrir is not a banned organization under Ukrainian law, and its members' meeting which the video depicts was a peaceful assembly. Since the annexation, and in violation of international humanitarian law, Russia has fully incorporated the peninsula into the Russian Federation and imported its legislation wholesale, including its more repressive elements.

### **Please write immediately in Russian or your own language:**

- Urging the de facto and the Russian authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Emil Kurbedinov from administrative detention as he is being solely targeted as a reprisal for his human rights activities;
- Calling on them to fully respect and protect the human rights of lawyers and implement in law, policy and practice protections provided for by international law and standards, in particular by the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers;
- Urging them to ensure that all human rights defenders in Crimea are able to carry out their legitimate activities free of harassment and without fear of reprisals, as set out in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 MARCH 2017 TO:**

Prosecutor of Crimea  
Oleg Kamshilov  
Fax: +7 365 255 03 10  
Email: sekretar@rkproc.ru  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor**

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation  
Yurii Yakovlevich Chaika  
Prosecutor General's Office  
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a  
125993 Moscow GSP- 3  
Russian Federation  
Fax: +7 495 987 5841 / +7 495 692 1725  
**Salutation: Dear Prosecutor General**

Ombudsperson of Crimea  
Ludmila Lubina  
upchvrk@mail.ru  
Fax: +7 365 260 11 42  
**Salutation: Dear Ludmila Lubina**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.** HER EXCELLENCY Ms Natalia Galibarenko, Embassy of Ukraine, 60 Holland Park W11 3SJ. Tel: 020 7727 6312, Fax: 020 7792 1708, Email: emb\_gb@mfa.gov.ua [www.ukremb.org.uk](http://www.ukremb.org.uk)  
**Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.**

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In its recent report *Ukraine: Crimea in the dark: the silencing of dissent* (<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR50/5330/2016/en/>) Amnesty International has documented the relentless repression of opposing voices in Crimea since the Russian occupation and annexation in February-March 2014. Crimean Tatar leaders and activists have been the most organized focus of opposition, and are therefore the main target of the de facto and the Russian authorities.

Lawyers representing several of those mentioned in the report *Ukraine: Crimea in the dark: the silencing of dissent* have themselves become targets of harassment, including threats of criminal prosecution and the withdrawal of their professional licenses. Emil Kurbedinov is one of them.

Emil Kurbedinov represented the four defendants in the “Hizb ut-Tahrir case” documented in the report. He is also often the first lawyer to arrive at the scene when a house belonging to ethnic Crimean Tatars is raided and searched by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and in other instances where members of the Crimean Tatar community require legal assistance vis-à-vis the Russian and de facto Crimean authorities. He has faced a range of threats and other forms of harassment, from authorities. His past harassment and his recent arrest and detention have been intent on forcing him to give up his legal practice.

UA: 31/17 Index: EUR 50/5595/2017 Issue Date: 30 January 2017