

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST FORCIBLY DETAINED IN PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL

Prisoner of conscience Ilmi Umerov was sent to a psychiatric institution “for examination” on 18 August. He remains there against his will and is under criminal investigation for his peaceful activism against Russian occupation of Crimea and could be facing prison if convicted. There are concerns for his health.

Ilmi Umerov, 59, is an ethnic Crimean Tatar activist and deputy leader of the Mejlis, a representative body elected by Crimean Tatars. He has consistently publicly opposed the Russian occupation of Crimea in 2014. Earlier this year, while speaking on television, Ilmi Umerov called for the international sanctions against Russia to be “intensified to force it to leave Crimea and Donbass”.

The Federal Security Service of Russia (FSB) opened a criminal investigation against Ilmi Umerov on 12 May under Article 280.1(2) of the Criminal Code (“calls for the violation of the Russian Federation’ territorial integrity using mass media and the internet”). He was initially placed under travel restrictions as a criminal suspect, but on 11 August Kyivskyi District Court in Simferopol ordered his forced psychiatric examination. His lawyers’ appeal against this decision has still not been heard.

Nonetheless, on 18 August, Ilmi Umerov was apprehended by FSB officers, inside a hospital where he was undergoing emergency treatment for high blood pressure, and forcibly transferred to the Psychiatric Hospital #1 in Simferopol. He was denied any contact with his family and lawyers on the first day of his confinement in the psychiatric institution. The hospital is restricting him the use of his mobile phone and the amount of private meetings with his visitors, including his family and lawyers.

Ilmi Umerov’s family is concerned about his health. He suffers from diabetes, Parkinson’s disease and other health problems. According to his family, he is not receiving adequate medical treatment for his conditions.

Please write immediately in Ukrainian, Russian or your own language:

- Urging the de facto authorities in Crimea to immediately release Ilmi Umerov from forced psychiatric confinement and reminding them that involuntary psychiatric treatment without free and informed consent may amount to torture or other ill-treatment;
- Calling on them to drop all criminal proceedings against Ilmi Umerov as he is being only prosecuted for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to immediately grant him unhindered access to his family and lawyer, and provide Ilmi Umerov with all the necessary medical care he may require for his health problems while he is still on detention.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 OCTOBER 2016 TO:

Prosecutor of Crimea

Nataliya Poklonskaya

Simferopol, Crimea

Fax: +7 365 255 03 10

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

Director of Federal Security Service for

Crimea

Viktor Palagin

Simferopol, Crimea

Fax: +7 365 225 60 31

Email: fsb@fsb.ru

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant General

And copies to:

Human Rights Commissioner in Crimea

Lyudmila Lyubina

Simferopol, Crimea

Email: upchvrk@mail.ru

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HER EXCELLENCY Ms Natalia Galibarenko, Embassy of Ukraine, 60 Holland Park W11 3SJ, 020 7727 6312, Fax 020 7792 1708

emb_gb@mfa.gov.ua, 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

Ilmi Umerov was born in Uzbekistan to Crimean Tatar parents who were deported by the Soviet authorities from Crimea in 1944. After the Crimean Tatars started gradually returning to the peninsula in the late 1980s, Ilmi Umerov became a prominent member of the Crimean Tatar cultural movement and local politician. In August 2014, following Russian occupation and annexation of the peninsula, he resigned from his position of the Head of local administration for Bakhchisaray District in protest. He has remained an outspoken critic of the annexation and peacefully advocated return of Crimea to Ukraine.

Senior members of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People have faced reprisals, including harassment, forced exile and criminal prosecution in connection with their outspoken opposition to the Russian occupation and annexation of Crimea. On 26 April 2016, the Supreme Court of Crimea pronounced the Mejlis to be an “extremist organisation” under Russian legislation thereby making its membership and any further activities on its behalf a criminal offence. The appeal against this ruling has not been heard (see press release: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/press-releases/2016/04/ban-on-ethnic-crimean-tatar-assembly-aimed-at-snuffing-out-dissent/>).

Amnesty International has documented the alarming rise of violations of the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association in Crimea since its annexation by Russia in March 2014 (see report: *One year on: Violations of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association in Crimea*, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/1129/2015/en/>). Furthermore, several ethnic Crimean Tatars and other pro-Ukrainian activists have been forcibly disappeared. In the latest instance, Crimean Tatar activist Ervin Ibragimov went missing near his house on 24 May 2016 (see Urgent Action: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/4121/2016/en/>). Footage from a nearby camera showed a group of men forcing him into a van and then driving away. None of these disappearances has been effectively investigated.

According to international law and standards, deprivation of liberty on grounds of mental illness is unjustified if not strictly necessary to protect the safety of the person or of others. There is no evidence whatsoever that Ilmi Umerov poses any danger to himself or others, and his forced psychiatric confinement appears to be intended as reprisal for his political activism.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities forbids the deprivation of liberty based on the existence of any disability, including mental or intellectual. Furthermore, the Special Rapporteur on torture has said that medical treatment administered in the absence of free and informed consent may amount to torture or other ill-treatment.

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