

URGENT ACTION

CONVICTION OF CRIMEANS MUST BE QUASHED

The Russian Military Court of Appeal will imminently review the verdict of human rights defender Emir-Usein Kuku and his five co-defendants. The six men were arrested in Russian-occupied Crimea, brought before a Russian military court, convicted under trumped-up charges and handed lengthy prison sentences in November 2019, following unfair trials. They are prisoners of conscience and must be immediately and unconditionally released and their sentences quashed.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Valeriy Georgievich Petrov
Chief Military Prosecutor

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Dear Chief Military Prosecutor,

*I am writing to you concerning the case of human rights defender **Emir-Usein Kuku** and his co-defendants **Muslim Aliev, Vadim Siruk, Enver Bekirov, Arsen Dzhepparov** and **Refat Alimov**. The six men, all Crimean residents, have not committed any crime, yet have already spent more than four years behind bars and separated from their families and loved ones. It is time to put an end to this injustice.*

They were arrested in 2016 and in November 2019 they were convicted under trumped-up “terrorism”-related charges and other charges, even though no credible evidence of their involvement in any internationally recognizable crime was presented during their protracted trial. Their prosecution is politically motivated. Their transfer from Crimea to Russia and their trial before a military court violated international humanitarian law and their right to a fair trial. Muslim Aliyev was sentenced to 19 years in prison, Enver Bekirov to 18 years, Vadim Siruk and Emir-Usein Kuku to 12 years each, Refat Alimov to eight years and Arsen Dzhepparov to seven years.

This case is emblematic of the persecution of members of the Crimean Tatar community and all dissenting voices in Crimea following its occupation and annexation by Russia in 2014. Human rights defender Emir-Usein Kuku and his family have faced numerous instances of harassment by the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) before his arrest in 2016, which, together with his subsequent arrest and imprisonment under false charges, represented the ultimate effort to silence him for exposing human rights violations in Crimea.

In the light of the above, I urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that the criminal prosecution of Emir-Usein Kuku, Muslim Aliev, Vadim Siruk, Enver Bekirov, Arsen Dzhepparov and Refat Alimov stops, they are immediately and unconditionally released, and their criminal records are cleared.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Crimea came under Russian control following the events of February-March 2014, when Russia used its troops to occupy the peninsula and organised a “referendum” to justify the territory’s annexation in violation of international law.

Crimean Tatars are indigenous people of Crimea who prior to the occupation constituted an estimated 12 percent of the peninsula’s population. Many prominent members of the Crimean Tatar community have been among the most vocal critics of the Russian occupation, and the entire community has been regarded by the de facto authorities as disloyal and targeted with reprisals, alongside other critical voices. Independent media have been forced to shut down. Pro-Ukrainian activists have been prosecuted under trumped-up charges, like “extremism” or “terrorism”. Some activists went missing; evidence in some cases strongly suggests they were forcibly disappeared by the de facto authorities or paramilitaries acting as their proxies.

Emir-Usein Kuku has been one of the most prominent Crimean Tatar human rights defenders. He faced harassment on numerous occasions, and during his arrest was subjected to beating by officers of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB). His wife and children have been subjected to threats too.

Emir-Usein Kuku was arrested on 11 February 2016 and charged with “organising activities of a terrorist organization” for his alleged association with Hizb ut Tahrir, an Islamic movement which is banned as a “terrorist” organization in Russia but is legal in Ukraine. Emir-Usein Kuku denies any involvement with Hizb ut-Tahrir. The charges against him and his co-defendants are based on covertly acquired, and allegedly tampered, recordings of conversations, testimonies of “secret witnesses” and testimonies of Russian law enforcement officers, which they denounce as false. When the investigation was completed in December 2017, Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants were transferred from the Russian-occupied Crimea to the city of Rostov-on-Don (southwestern Russia), in violation of international humanitarian law. Their trial before a military court, also violated of their right to a fair trial.

Although the prosecution failed to present in court any credible evidence of the involvement of Emir-Usein Kuku Muslim Aliev, Vadim Siruk, Enver Bekirov, Arsen Dzhapparov and Refat Alimov in any internationally recognizable crime, the court convicted them of membership of a “terrorist” organization (Article 205.5 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation), and other crimes. Emir-Usein Kuku was also convicted of conspiring to seize power by violent means (Article 278 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). Amnesty International representatives attended some of the court hearings in their case.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Russian.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 23 July 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Emir-Usein Kuku (he/him), Muslim Aliev (he/him), Vadim Siruk (he/him), Enver Bekirov (he/him), Arsen Dzhapparov (he/him) and Refat Alimov (he/him).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/EUR46/1386/2019/en/>

And copies to:

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