

Human rights activists and journalists insist on the prompt release of Nariman Memedeminov, a civil journalist from Crimea

5 April 2018

At about 6 a.m on March 22, in Kholmovka village, Bakhchsarai district, Russian security forces broke into the house of Nariman Memedeminov, a Crimean Tatar and civil journalist. Memedeminov was thrown to the floor and handcuffed whilst his wife and little children were left in another room. The security officials conducted a search of his house. They seized the civil journalist and his wife's telephones and equipment. After the illegal search, detention and the following investigative actions in the Federal Security Service Office, Nariman Memedeminov was placed in a temporary detention facility in Simferopol. The detainee was charged under part 2 of article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation ('Public appeals made on the Internet for the carrying out of terrorist activities'). On March 23, the court arrested him until 16th of May 2018.

On April 3, the appeal on the preventive measure change for Nariman Memedeminov in the Supreme court of Simferopol was considered. The trial was held in close session. The court upheld the first instance decision. Nariman Memedeminov stays prisoned till May 16, 2018.

These illegal actions by the occupying authorities and the systematic harassment of activists and journalists on the peninsula (illegal searches, arbitrary detentions, interrogations, administrative arrests and confiscation of electronic devices) are of particular concern. Due to the absence of independent media in Crimea, civil journalists are the only source of objective information. Civil journalists cover searches, arrests and trials, document human rights violations, and inform relevant parties about them.

In 2017 the following facts pertaining to the prosecution of civil journalists were reported in Crimea:

- on April 12, 2017, in Bakhchisaray, representatives of the Federal National Guard conducted a search of the house of Crimean Tatar activist and civil journalist Seidamet Mustafaiev. During the search, the National Guard representatives used physical violence against those who came to report on the search and support Seydamet. Five civilian journalists were detained and sentenced to administrative arrest (from 3 to 10 days) and fines.

- on August 14, 2017, Artem Osipov was detained and taken to the police station for shooting independent picketing.
- in October 2017, several Crimean Tatar activists and civil journalists were detained and summoned to administrative proceedings, including Seiran Saliev, Timur Ibragimov, Amet Suleimanov and Ruslan Belialov.
- on November 8, 2017, the police searched the house of Alimdar (Ruslan) Belialov. During the search, his phones were seized and a large amount of money was stolen.
- on October 14, 2017, civil journalists Ruslan Gostev and Ruslan Suleimanov were detained by police officers.
- on November 8, 2017, a search was conducted of the house of Seitumer Seitumerov, an activist, civil journalist and cameraman working for the public association “Crimean Solidarity”. During the search, his laptop and phones were seized. Seitumerov was fined for a post he published on the social network “VKontakte” before the annexation of Crimea. Due to prosecution, the activist was forced to leave the peninsula.
- on January 25, 2017, after a search of his house, Crimean Tatar activist and civil journalist, Enver Krosh, was arrested.

In view of the above, we call on the Russian Federation and the occupying authorities in Crimea to:

- stop immediately the harassment of the civil journalist and activist of the Crimean Solidarity movement, Nariman Memedeminov, and release him from custody, as well as to conduct an unbiased investigation into his illegal detention;
- stop harassment of civil journalists, including administrative arrests, criminal charges, property confiscation and other repressions, ensuring all binding guarantees;
- conduct prompt, effective and impartial investigations into illegal detention and any kind of physical violence against civil journalists in Crimea, ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted, and take all necessary measures to prevent such attacks in the future;
- guarantee unrestricted access to public places and to places where offences have been committed, and allow independent journalists in Crimea to carry out their professional work, in order to ensure freedom of speech, freedom of access to information and freedom to disseminate it.

We call on the international community to:

- support the enforcement of freedom of expression and the right to information of civil journalists in Crimea, as well as of people living on the peninsula;
- put pressure on the Russian Federation and the occupying authorities in Crimea to stop the harassment of civil journalists and to ensure that the public observer function is performed without interference in their freedom of expression;
- provide the necessary protection for those civilian journalists who have become victims of repression and to support the professional activities of civil journalists in Crimea.

Singed by:

- *Human Rights Information Centre (Ukraine)*
- *Media Initiative for Human Rights (Ukraine)*
- *CrimeaSOS (Ukraine)*
- *Aider Muzhdabaiev, channel director and deputy general, ATR*
- *Osman Pashaiev, executive producer, UA: Crimea*
- *Truth Hounds (Global Network)*
- *Centre for Civil Liberties (Ukraine)*
- *Crimean Human Rights Group (Ukraine)*
- *Gaiana Yuksel, director, QHA Information Agency (Agency "Crimean news")*
- *Yuriy Matsarskiy, journalist*
- *Elizaveta Tsaregradskaya, journalst*
- *Seitumer Seitumerov, anchorman, ATR*
- *Yana Tkachiuk, journalist, 112-Ukraine*
- *Natalia Dvali, journalist, Gordon*
- *Nikolai Polozov, lawyer*
- *Oleksandr Polozhynskiy, musician, radio host Novoe Vremia*
- *Mustafa Nayyem. journalist, MP*
- *Mavile Degermendzhy, activist*
- *Irina Romaliyskaia, journalist, Hromadske radio*
- *Taras Ibragimov, journalist, freelancer*
- *Alena Savchiuk, journalist*
- *Sonia Sotnyk, radio host, Radio Rocks*
- *Roman Tsimbaliuk, journalist*
- *Evgeniy Karamian, journalist*
- *Oleksina Dorohan, journalist, Radio Svoboda*
- *Karina Orlova, Echo Moskv, The American Interest*
- *Elvina Seitbullaeva, journalist, ATR*
- *Yuriy Kulinich, TV presenter, ZIK*
- *Ihor Solovey, editor, LB.UA*
- *Sergey Berezhnoy, journalist, syndicate columnist, political commentator*
- *Alina Smutko, photojournalist*
- *Kateryna Kuvyta, activists, coordinator Automaidan Kyiv*
- *Oleksandra Dvoretzka, VostokSOS*
- *Maria Vasilieva, journalist, 1+1*

- *Marianna Prysiashniuk, correspondent, Ukrainian National News*
- *Ekaterina Liashenko, journalist, LIGA.net*
- *Andrei Kulikov, journalist, Hromadske Radio*
- *Elmaz Asanova, journalist, TV channel ATR*
- *Oleg Panyuta, journalist, TV channel "Ukraine"*
- *Alim Aliyev, program director, "Crimean House"*
- *Alexander Tverskoi, publicist*
- *Alexandra Obydennaya, journalist,*
- *Alexei Loskutov, Member of the Latvian Parliament*
- *Evgeny Tsibulenko, Head of the Ukrainian Communities of Estonia*
- *Marina Berdichevskaya, journalist, Radio Vesti*
- *Edem Dudakov, activist of the national movement of the Crimean Tatars*
- *Elena Ivanova, volunteer*
- *Valery Balayan, film-director*
- *Refat Chubarov, the head of Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars*
- *Eskender Bariev, member of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatars*
- *Taras Ratushny, journalist*
- *Masi Nayem, lawyer*
- *Sergey Takhmazov, journalist*
- *Irina Pavlenko, editor, TV channel "1 + 1"*
- *Galina Sklyarevskaya, GO "Detector Media"*
- *Irina Kashchei, freelance correspondent, LB.ua*
- *Anastasia Prikhodko, Ukrainian singer*
- *Ahtem Seitablayev, film-director, journalist*
- *Valentina Samar, journalist, Center for Journalistic Investigations*
- *Shevket Nemetullayev, journalist, TV channel "ATR"*
- *Sergei Berezhnoy, journalist, columnist, political commentator*
- *Dmitry Karp, activist, coordinator of the "Avtomaydan Kyiv"*
- *Sergey Stroy, activist, coordinator of the "Avtomaydan Kyiv"*
- *Dmitry Karp, activist, coordinator of the "Avtomaydan Kyiv"*
- *Irina Trofimenko, coordinator of GO "Avtomaydan Kyiv"*
- *The independent Crimean media worker's Trade Union*
- *International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR) (Belgium)*
- *Human Rights Monitoring Institute (Lithuania)*
- *Barys Zvozkau Belarusian Human Rights House (Belarus)*
- *Center for Participation and Development (Georgia)*

- *Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan (Kyrgyzstan)*
- *Human Rights Matter e.V (Germany)*
- *Legal Transformation Center (Belarus)*
- *Macedonian Helsinki Committee (Macedonia)*
- *DRA - Deutsch-Russischer Austausch e.V.(Germany)*
- *Bulgarian Helsinki Committee (Bulgaria)*
- *Office of civil freedoms (Tajikistan)*
- *Informationplattform humanrights.ch (Switzerland)*
- *Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights (Poland)*
- *Kazakhstan International Bureau for Human Rights and the Rule of Law (Kazakhstan)*
- *Citizens' Watch (Ukraine)*
- *Helsinki Citizens' Assembly-Vanadzor (Armenia)*
- *Public Association "Dignity" (Kazakhstan)*
- *Netherlands Helsinki Committee (Netherlands)*
- *Legal policy research center (Kazakhstan)*
- *Libereco - Partnership for Human Rights (Germany)*
- *Helsinki Committee of Armenia (Armenia)*
- *Human rights center "Viasna" (Belarus)*
- *Center for the Development of Democracy and Human Rights (Russia)*
- *Association UMDPL (Ukraine)*

- *Hrhf, Human Rights House Foundation (Switzerland)*
- *Kharkiv Regional Foundation "Public Alternative" (Ukraine)*
- *RCSS (Regional Center for Strategic Studies) (Sri Lanka)*
- *Norwegian Helsinki Committee (Norway)*
- *MRG Europe (Hungary)*
- *Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan (Azerbaijan)*
- *Helsinki Association for Human Rights NGO (Armenia)*
- *Public Verdict (Russia)*