



2023

LIST OF IMPRISONED CRIMEAN JOURNALISTS

Iryna Danylovych

Citizen journalist, contributed to many independent media outlets, in particular, the InZhyr-Media project and the Crimean Trial initiative, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the temporarily occupied Crimea since April 2022.

Lived in the village of Vladyslavivka near Feodosia. Worked as a nurse in Koktebel, was engaged in citizen journalism and published her materials anonymously. Covered the topics of the rights of healthcare workers and cooperated with media outlets that covered political trials in occupied Crimea.

On April 29, 2022, she was abducted by four Russian law enforcement officers wearing civilian clothes. The abduction was caught on camera. Meanwhile, a search was conducted in her house, all equipment was seized. There was no connection with her for 13 days. As it turned out, Danylovych was held in the FSB office for 8 days, forced to pass polygraph tests, threatened, and given food only once a day. On the 13th day of detention, her family was informed that Iryna was in a pre-trial detention center in Simferopol. She was charged with “illegal possession of explosives”. In July 2022, Danylovych reported being beaten by FSB officers and subjected to psychological pressure by Russian security forces. She faces up to eight years in prison and a fine of up to RUB 100,000. On December 28, 2022, she was found guilty, sentenced to seven years in prison and a fine of RUB 50,000. While the appeal is pending consideration, she stays in a Simferopol pre-trial detention center, where the journalist almost lost her hearing due to the lack of medical care.



“ Truth itself is the most powerful, most dangerous weapon against the state machine and against lies... The totalitarian regime does not need people who frankly tell the truth, we have been made sure of this more than once. Neither it needs thinking people. For the most part, prisons are now filled with just such people. The regime sees a force in them that it will not be able to resist,” Iryna Danylovych said on December 27, 2022.

Seyran Saliyev

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since October 2017. He was studying for a teacher of Crimean Tatar and Turkish language and literature and has incomplete higher education.

He lived in Bakhchisarai and worked as a tour guide. After Crimea was annexed, Saliyev covered raids on the homes of Crimean Tatars. Publicly called fellow citizens for solidarity and support for the victims of the persecution of Muslims, for which he was fined in 2016.

His home was searched for the first time in January 2017. In October 2017, Russian security forces arrested him during a raid on trumped-up charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organization and preparing for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 16 years in a high-security prison. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was partially upheld and the prison term was reduced to 15 years. Saliyev was transferred to a high-security prison in Tula, Russia.

“***We are guilty only of talking a lot about the seizure of Crimea by Russia and slander against our people. We are guilty of not sitting at home when we saw injustice,***” Seyran Saliev said on October 30, 2021.

#FreeSaliev



Marlen (Suleyman) Asanov

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since October 2017. Teacher of Turkish and Crimean Tatar language and literature by profession.

Lived in Bakhchisarai. In 2002, he founded the Salachyk caravanserai, a Crimean Tatar cultural and ethnographic center. Since the beginning of the occupation, he provided assistance to the families of Crimean political prisoners, covered court trials and problems of the families of political prisoners.

In the autumn of 2017, Russian security forces searched his home on trumped-up charges of organizing the activities of a terrorist organization and preparing for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 19 years in a high-security prison. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was rejected. On September 8, 2022, his wife, Ayshe Asanova, reported that Marlen Asanov had been transferred from Rostov-on-Don, where he had been staying during the entire trial, to a Russian high-security colony in the Republic of Mordovia.

“***Today, many people are persecuted in Crimea. The authorities are trying to present it as a ‘fight against terrorism’. But let them know that lies are doomed to failure. The Crimean Tatars and the international community will not believe these false accusations,***” Marlen Asanov said on August 2, 2018.

#FreeAsanov

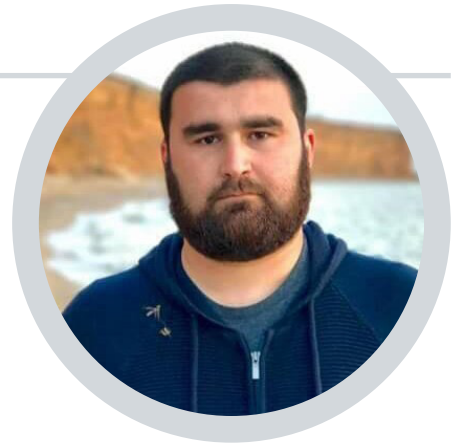


Tymur Ibragimov

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since October 2017.

Lived in Bakhchisarai. Since 2015, he covered searches in the homes of Crimean Tatar activists and politically motivated trials. He has a disability related to an eye injury since childhood.

In October 2017, Russian security forces arrested him during a raid on his home on trumped-up charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organization and preparing for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 17 years in a high-security prison. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was rejected. On August 22, 2022, it became known that the Crimean Solidarity activist will serve the entire prison term in a high-security prison in the village of Klekotki, Ryazan region of the Russian Federation.



In 1944, we were declared traitors and delivered to Asia in wagons. We returned, thank Allah. And today we are accused of ‘extremism’ and ‘terrorism’ under various pretexts. They intimidate the local population with their “[little green] men” [Russian servicemen wearing green military uniform that seized Crimea in 2014]. They openly say: ‘If someone doesn’t like it, go away.’ This is very reminiscent of the events of 1944 [deportation of Crimean Tatars] only rehashed,” Tymur Ibragimov said on June 7, 2019.

[#FreeIbragimov](#)

Osman Arifmemetov

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since March 2019. Computer science teacher by profession.

Lived in Simferopol. Since 2015, he covered human rights violations in Crimea, helped to send parcels to Crimean Tatar prisoners in pre-trial detention centers. In 2019, he received a special Words of Freedom prize at the Crimean fig/Qırım inciri literary competition, and his short story “My Deportation” was shortlisted in the nomination “Prose in the Ukrainian language”.

In March 2019, Russian security forces arrested him in the town of Aksay (Rostov region, Russia), and searched his home. Trumped-up charges – participating in the activities of a terrorist organization and preparing for a violent seizure of power – were brought against Osman Arifmemetov. He is held in a pre-trial detention center in Rostov-on-Don. On August 16, 2022, a prosecutor requested the court to sentence Arifmemetov to 16.5 years in prison. The court found Arifmemetov guilty and sentenced him to 14 years in prison, with the first four years to be served in prison and one year of restricted freedom after serving the sentence.



My struggle is openly visible on my Facebook page. I covered injustice and I was called a terrorist for that. Crimean Tatars and Muslims showed their political position. They did not support the oppressors. This regime is afraid of political unity,” Osman Arifmemetov said on May 21, 2019.

[#FreeArifmemetov](#)

Server Mustafayev

Citizen journalist, coordinator and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, human rights defender, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since May 2018. Gas supply systems engineer by profession.

Lived in Bakhchisarai. Co-founded the Crimean Solidarity association. He publicly spoke out in defense of victims of political persecution, covered human rights violations in Crimea. In 2019 and 2020, he received a special Words of Freedom prize at the Crimean fig/Qırım inciri literary competition, and his poem and short story were shortlisted in the nominations “Poetry in the Crimean Tatar language” and “Prose in the Crimean Tatar language”.

In May 2018, Russian security forces arrested him during a raid on his home on trumped-up charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organization and preparing for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 14 years in a high-security prison. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was rejected. Since September 3, 2022, the political prisoner is in the transit and transfer point of Tambov region. From there, he will be transferred to a high-security prison.



Despite the sentences passed and the ongoing injustice, we do not give up and do not lose heart. We are all witnesses to the fact that it is the duty of each of us to cleanse ourselves of the slander against our people and religion in our days and throughout our history,”

Server Mustafayev said on May 17, 2021.

#FreeMustafayev



Ernes Ametov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity public association was imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation from October 2017 to September 2020, when the court acquitted him due to lack of evidence. After almost four years behind bars, Ametov was released from custody and returned to his family. In March 2022, the court of appeal overturned the verdict, and Ametov has been behind bars again since April.

He lived in Bakhchisarai, has a wife and two children. A lawyer by profession, after the illegal annexation of Crimea, he became a Crimean Solidarity citizen journalist, working as a photographer and cameraman.

In October 2017, Russian security forces searched his home, causing psychological trauma to the children. Ametov was detained together with five more Crimean Tatars, including three citizen journalists: Seyran Saliev, Marlen (Suleyman) Asanov, and Timur Ibragimov. Ametov was charged with activities of a terrorist organization. On December 29, 2022, Ernes Ametov was sentenced to 11 years in a high-security prison.



A human being was given a brain to analyze information. That's what I did. If this is a crime, then I'm sorry, I don't know how to live if I can't even compare the information. To be average, not to stick your head out further than one should in this country,”

Ernes Ametov said on September 2020.

#FreeAmetov



Asan Akhtemov

Citizen journalist of the Nefes initiative, contributed to the Avdet Crimean Tatar newspaper, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the temporarily occupied Crimea since September 2021.

Lived in Simferopol. Attended court hearings in the trials of Crimean Tatars, supported relatives of those arrested. Organized a project about civil society activists who stayed in Crimea after the annexation, was engaged in social and cultural projects.

He was detained by Russian security forces in September 2021 within a case in which Nariman Dzhelyal, First Deputy Head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, is also being prosecuted. He was tortured, forced to self-incriminate complicity in allegedly committing “act of sabotage”, which allegedly happened on a gas pipeline in the Crimean village of Perevalne on August 23, 2021. The lawyer was allowed to see him only ten days after his detention. Akhtemov faces 10 to 20 years in prison. He is held in a pre-trial detention center in Simferopol. The investigation is completed. On September 21, 2022, the court sentenced Akhtemov to 15 years in prison, a fine of RUB 500,000, and one year of restricted freedom after serving the main sentence. Other defendants in this case, Nariman Dzhelyal and his cousin, Aziz Akhtemov, were sentenced to 17 and 13 years in prison, respectively.



My main dream is to live in Crimea and see my people flourishing and happy. I believe that it will be so. I'm infinitely grateful to all the people who support us in these difficult times. I do not give up only thanks to you,”

Asan Akhtemov said on October 5, 2021.

#FreeAkhtemov



Ruslan Suleymanov

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since March 2019. Physics teacher by profession.

Lived in Simferopol district of Crimea. Covered human rights violations in Crimea, for which he was detained in 2017 and 2019. Gave physics lessons for children of political prisoners. His three-year-old son Musa died tragically in 2020.

In March 2019, Russian security forces arrested Suleymanov during a raid on his home. In July 2019, he underwent a compulsory psychiatric examination. He is charged with organizing the activities of a terrorist organization. Suleymanov is held in a pre-trial detention center in Rostov-on-Don. The court found Suleymanov guilty and sentenced him to 14 years in prison, with the first four years to be served in prison and one year of restricted freedom after serving the sentence.



After 2014, the active group of citizens has been declared terrorists and extremists, people have gone missing and have been tortured to death for their position. I am speaking of Reshat Ametov, the case of Vedzhie Kashka – when the detention of elderly activists led to their death – numerous criminal cases and pressure on activists, Crimean Tatars,”

Ruslan Suleymanov said on May 20, 2020.

#FreeSuleymanov



Oleksiy Bessarabov

Journalist, deputy editor-in-chief of the Black Sea Security journal, analyst, reserve officer of the Naval Forces of Ukraine, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since November 2016.

Lived in Sevastopol. Prepared publications on security issues and problems of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in Crimea. Contributed to the Glavred media outlet, published articles in the Sudokhodstvo, Black Sea Security, Dzerkalo Tzhynia media outlets under the pseudonym “Oleksiy Streletsky”.

In November 2016, he was detained by Russian security forces and later arrested on trumped-up charges of preparing sabotage at “military and critical infrastructure objects of the peninsula.” He was tortured, being forced to self-incriminate. In April 2019, Bessarabov was sentenced to 14 years in a high-security prison and a fine of RUB 300,000. His appeal was rejected. Now he serves his sentence in a penal colony in Kochubeyevskoye (Stavropol Krai of Russia).



“*We, political prisoners, knowing about the preparation of meetings with the President of Ukraine and the meeting of the U.S. President with the Russian president, believe that the main topic should be the unconditional release of persons illegally detained by Russia from colonies in the territory of the Russian Federation and Crimea. It is not a matter of politics, it is a matter of restoring the minimum level of trust, honor, and morality of the leaders of the nations of the 21st century,*” Oleksiy Bessarabov said on May 5, 2021.

[#FreeBessarabov](#)

Vladyslav Yesypenko

Freelance contributor to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s project “Crimea.Realities”, has been imprisoned for political reasons in Crimea since March 2021.

At the time of the occupation of Crimea, he lived with his family in Sevastopol, and later moved to Kryvyi Rih. In 2016, became a freelance contributor to RFE/RL’s project “Crimea.Realities”, prepared materials on social and environmental situation in Crimea, surveyed Crimeans.

In March 2021, he was arrested by Russian security forces on charges of illegal manufacturing and storing explosives. He was tortured for a long time, and a staged interview was published in which Yesypenko allegedly admits he passed information on to the Security Service of Ukraine. On February 16, 2022, he was sentenced to six years in prison and a fine of RUB 110,000. On August 18, 2022, the “court of appeals” of occupied Simferopol “reduced” his sentence from six to five years in a general regime colony and also reduced the amount of the fine from RUB 110,000 to RUB 105,000. Now the journalist is serving his sentence in a penal facility in the town of Kerch.



“*Many of us were tortured, threatened with physical destruction, blackmailed by family and friends so that we would confess to what we did not do... and betray our homeland. We resist as best we can, deny what we said under torture, convey our truth in court, and write letters to free people so that you know: we do not give up,*” Vladyslav Yesypenko said on October 26, 2021.

[#FreeYesypenko](#)

Amet Suleymanov

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been under house arrest for political reasons in the temporarily occupied Crimea since March 2020. Worked as a sales manager in a mobile shop.

Lived in Bakhchisarai. Covered searches and arrests of Crimean Tatars, for which he was detained twice by the occupation authorities in 2017 and 2019. In recent years, he had to limit his activities due to heart disease.

In the spring of 2020, Russian security forces arrested him on trumped-up charges of involvement in the activities of a terrorist organization. In 2021, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison, Suleymanov's defense filed an appeal. The prison sentence threatens his life as he needs a heart valve replacement. He was under house arrest since the search, but the prosecutor requested actual imprisonment. On February 9, 2023, the Court of Appeal of Vlasikha town (Russia) upheld the verdict of the court of the first instance. According to it, Amet Suleymanov was sentenced to 12 years in prison and risks dying in prison due to the urgent need for an operation to replace a heart valve.



“**Today, Crimea has not become a “center of terrorism” as some want to present it. It is a center of brave men and women who are ready to tell the truth and defend justice even under the threat of imprisonment, torture, and abduction,**”
Amet Suleymanov said on April 27, 2021.

#FreeSuleymanov

Vilen Temeryanov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity public association, correspondent of Grani.ru outlet, has been imprisoned for political reasons in temporarily occupied Crimea since August 2022.

Lived in the village of Vilne, Dzhankoy district. After the occupation of Crimea, covered searches in the homes of Crimean Tatars and politically motivated trials. The occupation authorities repeatedly detained him, in particular, in November 2021, during the mass detention of Crimean Tatars, who greeted lawyer Edem Samedlyayev with flowers after serving illegal arrest.

Temeryanov was detained by Russian security forces on August 11, 2022, during the raid on his home. The next day, he was remanded in custody and charged with participation in the activities of a terrorist organization. He faces up to 20 years in prison. While the so-called investigation within his case continues, Temeryanov is held in a pre-trial detention center in Simferopol.



“**Over all these years, I have understood: what is happening in Crimea is a new method to intimidate my people and another repression for a persistent position and disagreement with Russia's policy. As a reasonable person and a citizen journalist, I show patience and resilience in these difficult times for my people. I will oppose the arbitrariness of the Russian judicial system, continue to confidently and steadfastly do everything that depends on me and highlight the reality of Crimea. Strong people always appear in difficult times, and I hope I am one of them,**” Vilen Temeryanov said on January 17, 2023.

#FreeTemeryanov

Remzi Bekirov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity association, correspondent of Grani.ru media outlet, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since March 2019. History teacher by profession.

Lived in Simferopol district of Crimea. After the annexation, he became a citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity, and later a correspondent of Grani.ru online media outlet. Covered violations of human rights in Crimea, livestreamed many hearings of trials of Vedzhi Kashka, February 26, Volodymyr Balukh, Crimean Muslims, for which he was detained in 2017 twice.

In March 2019, Russian security forces detained Bekirov in the town of Aksay (Rostov region, Russia), and searched his home. He was charged with organizing the activities of a terrorist organization. On March 10, 2022, he was sentenced to 19 years in prison. While the appeal is pending, he is held in a pre-trial detention center in Novocherkassk.



“ *The Russian Federation persecutes Crimean Tatars and Crimean Muslims for their dissent, for their refusal to think the way the government says, to be slaves on our land. And on top of that, according to the investigation, my crime is that I dared to cover this lawlessness, first becoming a citizen journalist and then a correspondent,*” Remzi Bekirov said on February 12, 2020.

#FreeBekirov

Rustem Sheykhaliev

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, has been imprisoned for political reasons in the Russian Federation since March 2019.

Lived in Simferopol district of Crimea, entrepreneur. Since 2015, covered human rights violations in Crimea, attended court hearings, helped families of political prisoners, and organized the purchase of things to be sent to prisoners.

In March 2019, Russian security forces arrested him during a raid on his home. Trumped-up charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organization were brought against Sheykhaliev. He is held in a pre-trial detention center in Rostov-on-Don. Prosecutors request the court to sentence him to 17 years in prison. The court found Sheykhaliev guilty and sentenced him to 14 years in prison, with the first four years to be served in prison and one year of restricted freedom after serving the sentence.



“ *Many are surprised at the support provided by our people and say: ‘I have never seen anything like this before.’ I answer: ‘If you arrest one, ten will come instead, if you arrest ten, a hundred will come, and if you arrest a hundred, a thousand will come. Our people are like a single organism, we have such traditions of support,*” Rustem Sheykhaliev said on May 24, 2019.

#FreeSheykhaliev

