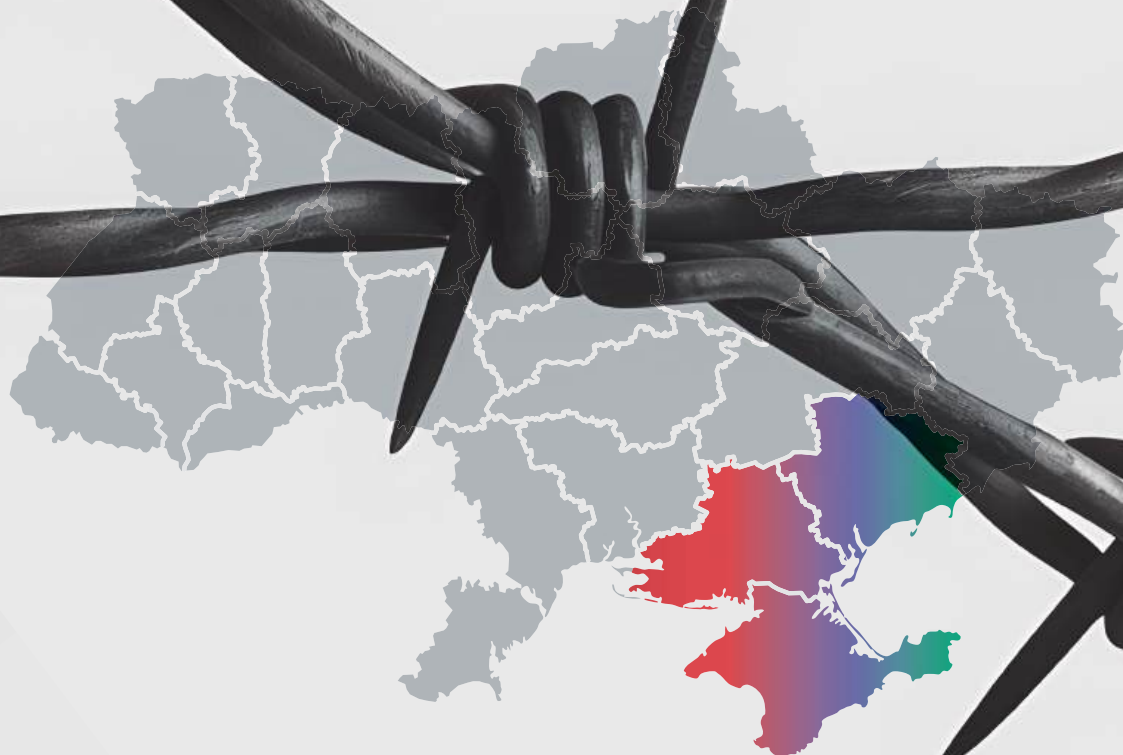




HUMAN RIGHTS CENTER



2026

LIST OF IMPRISONED UKRAINIAN JOURNALISTS

Oleksii Bessarabov

Journalist, deputy editor-in-chief of the Black Sea Security magazine, analyst and reserve officer of the Ukrainian Navy, imprisoned since November 2016.

He lived in Sevastopol and was engaged in publications on security issues and problems of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Crimea. In the past, he was a correspondent for the Glavred news outlet and under the pseudonym Oleksii Streletskyi, was published in the publications Shipping, Black Sea Security, and Mirror of the Week. He was an expert at the Ukrainian Centre for the Promotion of Geopolitical Studies and Euro-Atlantic Cooperation of the Black Sea Region Nomos.

In November 2016, he was detained by Russian security forces and subsequently arrested on trumped-up charges of preparing a sabotage at “military infrastructure and life support facilities on the peninsula”. He was tortured to extract a confession and in April 2019, he was sentenced to 14 years in a maximum security penal colony and fined 300,000 rubles. After his appeal was rejected, he is being held in the Kochubeevskoye penal colony (Stavropol Krai, Russia).

“**We, the political prisoners, knowing about the upcoming meetings with the President of Ukraine, and then the President of the United States with the Russian President, believe that the main topic should be the unconditional release of persons illegally detained by Russia from colonies in the Russian Federation and Crimea. This is not a matter of politics, it is a matter of restoring the minimum level of trust, honour and morality of the leaders of the nations of the 21st century**” – Oleksii Bessarabov, May 5, 2021.

#FreeBessarabov



Dmytro Shtyblikov

Analyst and military journalist, deputy editor-in-chief of the Black Sea Security magazine. In 2003, he retired from the Armed Forces of Ukraine for health reasons. He lived in Sevastopol and until 2014, he worked at the Nomos Centre for the Study of Geopolitical Problems and Euro-Atlantic Cooperation of the Black Sea Region in Sevastopol. He was published in Ukrainian, Russian and Western publications. Shtyblikov worked on a scientific paper on international legal aspects of the fight against terrorism, participated in conferences in Ukraine and Russia, as well as in the countries of the South Caucasus countries. He has been imprisoned since November 2016.

Shtyblikov was detained by the Russian FSB on November 9, 2016, in Sevastopol. The FSB stated that he was allegedly a member of a “sabotage and terrorist group of the Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine”. Shtyblikov was accused of planning sabotage attacks on military infrastructure and life support facilities in Sevastopol. In May 2017, under coercion and threats to his family members, Dmytro Shtyblikov entered into a pre-trial agreement with the investigation – he pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with the investigation. His case was considered under a special procedure without examining the evidence of guilt.

On November 16, 2017, the Sevastopol City Court under the occupation authorities sentenced Shtyblikov to five years in a maximum security penal colony and a fine of 200 thousand rubles.

On November 8, 2021, Dmytro Shtyblikov was to be released due to the completion of his sentence in the case of the “Crimean saboteurs”. On the same day, he was transferred from the FSB Lefortovo Detention Centre to Rostov-on-Don, where a new case was opened against him in the Southern District Military Court, this time under Article 275 of the Russian Criminal Code, “High Treason”. The court announced the new sentence for the political prisoner on November 9, 2016, and now Shtyblikov must



unjustifiably spend another 14 years and 6 months in a maximum security penal colony under Article 275 in Russia, with a one-year post-sentence restriction. In November 2022, a Russian court rejected the appeal and cassation appeals filed by Dmytro Shtyblikov and his defence lawyers.

After his second sentence, Shtyblikov was transferred back to Penal Colony No. 6 in Omsk, where he had previously been held. The 54-year-old prisoner's health is steadily deteriorating: he has developed hypertension, his teeth are crumbling, his gums are sore, and he has kidney problems. His eyesight has also deteriorated significantly.

The conditions in which Shtyblikov is being held are still harsh: he is kept in solitary confinement in the CTP (cell-type premises) and is allowed only one short walk in a closed small yard. He is not allowed to watch videos, make simple calls or have visits.

“**My father is deprived of all contact and held in a complete information vacuum**” – daughter of political prisoner Dmytro Shtyblikov, Tetiana, May 22, 2023

#FreeShtyblikov

Seiran Saliiev

Citizen journalist, streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, imprisoned since October 2017. He has incomplete higher education as a teacher of Crimean Tatar and Turkish language and literature.

He lived in Bakhchysarai and worked as a tour guide. After the occupation of Crimea, he covered the occupational authority's searches of the homes of Crimean Tatars. He publicly called on his fellow citizens to show solidarity and support for victims of Muslim persecution, for which he was fined in 2016.

The first search of his home took place in January 2017. In October of the same year, Russian security forces detained Saliiev during a search on trumped-up charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organisation and preparing for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 16 years in prison in a maximum security penal colony. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was partially upheld, and his sentence was reduced to 15 years.

He was transferred to the maximum security penal colony in Tula, the Russian Federation. In July 2023, the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia denied a request to transfer Saliiev to a prison closer to Crimea.

On June 21, 2024, Saliiev was recognised as a malicious violator of his sentence and received more strict conditions of detention. Since then, he has been held in a punishment cell without any valid grounds.

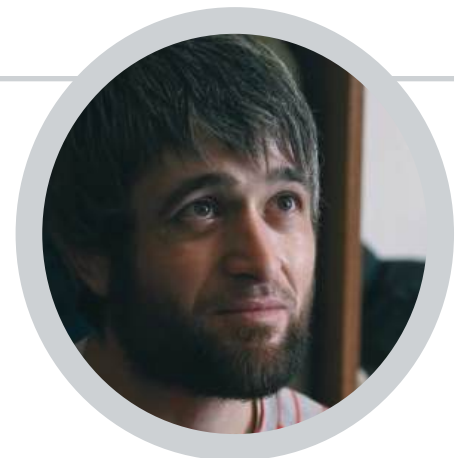
“**For seven years, I have existed in a world of broken destinies, dead souls and watchers**” – Seiran Saliiev, October 11, 2024.

#FreeSaliiev

Marlen (Suleiman) Asanov

Citizen journalist and streamer of Crimean Solidarity public association, imprisoned since October 2017. By profession – a teacher of Turkish and Crimean Tatar language and literature.

Asanov lived in Bakhchysarai and in 2002, he founded the Salachyk Caravanserai, a Crimean Tatar cultural and ethnographic centre. From the beginning of the occupation, he provided assistance to the families of Crimean political prisoners and covered the 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 organising a terrorist organisation and preparing for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 19 years in prison in a maximum security penal colony. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was rejected. On September 8, 2022, his wife, Aishe Asanova, reported that Marlen was transferred from Rostov-on-Don, where he had been held throughout the trial, to the Russian Maximum Security Penal Colony No. 7 in the Republic of Mordovia.

On August 9, 2024, the Bakhchysarai District Court in Crimea denied Asanov's appeal to transfer him from Penal Colony No. 7 in the village of Sosnovka, Republic of Mordovia, to a colony located closer to Crimea, where his family lives.

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

#FreeAsanov

Tymur Ibrahimov

Citizen journalist and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, imprisoned since October 2017.

He lived in Bakhchysarai. Since 2015, he has been covering searches of Crimean Tatar activists' homes and politically motivated trials. He has had a disability since childhood due to an eye injury.

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

Ibrahimov has a third-degree visual impairment; one of his eyes was replaced with an artificial one over 15 years ago. Now, the political prisoner needs to have his eye implant replaced, but this cannot be done in the prison hospital. In August 2023, Ibrahimov was diagnosed with gallstones. In addition to worsening vision problems and gallstones, the journalist suffers from back and joint pain and chronic fatigue.

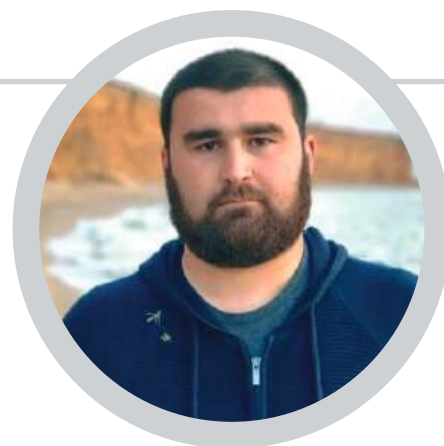
“**In 1944, we were already declared traitors and taken to Asia in wagons. Thanks to Allah, we returned. And today we are accused of “extremism” and “terrorism” under various grounds. They intimidate the local population with their “men”. They openly say: “If someone doesn’t like it, leave”. This is very similar to 1944, only under a new, modern ‘sauce’**” – Tymur Ibragimov, June 7, 2019.

#FreeIbragimov

Ernes Ametov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity, he was imprisoned from October 2017 to September 2020, when the court acquitted him due to lack of evidence. After almost four years in captivity, Ametov was released from custody and returned to his family. In March 2022, the Court of Appeal overturned this decision, and in April, Ametov was put behind bars again.

He lived in Bakhchysarai and has a wife and two children. A lawyer by profession, he became a citizen journalist for Crimean Solidarity after the occupation of Crimea, working as a photographer and videographer.



In October 2017, Russian security forces searched his home, causing psychological trauma to his children. Ametov was detained along with five other Crimean Tatars, three of whom were citizen journalists – Seiran Saliev, Marlen (Suleiman) Asanov and Tymur Ibragimov. Ametov was charged with a trumped-up charge of being a member of a terrorist organisation.

On December 29, 2022, Ernes Ametov was sentenced to 11 years in a maximum security penal colony.

In May 2024, Ernes Ametov was transferred to a colony in the Vologda region of Russia. There, he lost 10 kg.

“*The human brain was given to analyse information. That’s what I was doing. If this is a crime, then I’m sorry, I don’t know how to live if I can’t even analyse information. To be ordinary, to keep your head down more than is necessary in this country*” – Ernes Ametov, September 2020.

#FreeAmetov

Remzi Bekirov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity public association and correspondent of the Grani.ru publication, imprisoned since March 2019.

By profession – a history teacher. Bekirov lived in the Simferopol district of Crimea. After the illegal occupation of Crimea, he became a citizen journalist for Crimean Solidarity, and later a correspondent for the online publication Grani.ru. He covered human rights violations in Crimea and streamed coverage of the criminal cases against Vedzhyie Kashka, “26 February”, the case against Volodymyr Balukh and other Crimean muslims, for which he was detained twice in 2017.

In March 2019, Russian security forces detained him again in the city of Aksai (Rostov region, Russia) and searched his home. He was charged with trumped-up charges of organising the activities of a terrorist organisation. On March 10, 2022, he was sentenced to 19 years in prison.

In July 2024, Remzi Bekirov was transferred to Penal Colony No. 33 in Abakan of the Republic of Khakassia, where he was systematically pressured, placed in solitary confinement, threatened, and prohibited from communicating with his family and writing letters. The colony administration has repeatedly sent the journalist to solitary confinement for performing religious rites. Due to poor nutrition and other inadequate conditions of detention, Bekirov has developed serious problems with his teeth, hair, bones and veins.

“*Russia is persecuting Crimean Tatars and Crimean Muslims for their dissent. For not wanting to think the way the authorities say, for not wanting to be slaves on their own land. And on top of that, according to the investigation, my crime is that I dared to cover this lawlessness, becoming first a citizen journalist and then a correspondent*” – Remzi Bekirov, February 12, 2020.

#FreeBekirov

Server Mustafaiev

Citizen journalist, coordinator and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, human rights defender, imprisoned since May 2018.

By profession – a gas supply system engineer. Mustafaiev lived in Bakhchysarai. Co-founder of the Crimean Solidarity. He publicly defended victims of political persecution and covered human rights violations in Crimea. In 2019 and 2020, he received a special award from the literary contest “Crimean Fig/Qırım inciri” “Words of Freedom”, and his poem “Alhamdulillah, we are Muslims” and the short story “Zemaney



Yusuf Madrasa” were shortlisted in the nominations “Poetry in the Crimean Tatar language” and “Prose in the Crimean Tatar language”.

In May 2018, Russian security forces detained him during a search of his home on trumped-up charges of participation in a terrorist organisation and preparation for a violent seizure of power. In September 2020, he was sentenced to 14 years in prison in a maximum security penal colony. On March 14, 2022, his appeal was rejected. Since September 2022, Mustafaiev has been held in Tambov Penal Colony No. 1. Despite enrolling in a university on a distance learning basis in the colony, Mustafaiev was not allowed to pass the exams after the first semester of study, and in August 2023, he was sent to solitary confinement.

Server Mustafaiev continues to lose his eyesight in the harsh conditions of the barracks where he was transferred in February 2024. In August 2025, after a long visit, his wife reported that the journalist’s health had deteriorated sharply: he has severe pain in his lower back and constantly feels weak and tired. He is not receiving adequate medical care.

“**Despite the sentences imposed 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 clear ourselves of the slander that has been slandered against our people and religion in our days and throughout our history**” – Server Mustafaiev, 17 May 2021.

#FreeMustafayev

Osman Arifmemetov

Citizen journalist and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, imprisoned since March 2019.

By profession – a computer science teacher. Arifmemetov lived in Simferopol. Since 2015, he has been covering human rights violations in Crimea, helping to organise parcels for Crimean Tatar prisoners in pre-trial detention centres. In 2019, he received a special award at the literary contest “Crimean Fig/Qırım inciri” “Words of Freedom”, and his short story “My Deportation” was a finalist in the “Prose in Ukrainian language” category.

In March 2019, Russian security forces detained him in the city of Aksai (Rostov region of Russia) and searched his home. Osman Arifmemetov received trumped-up charges of participation in the activities of a terrorist organisation and preparation for a violent seizure of power. He was held in a pre-trial detention centre in Rostov-on-Don. On 16 August 2022, the prosecutor sentenced him to 16.5 years in prison.

On November 24, 2022, the Southern District Military Court of Russia sentenced Arifmemetov to 14 years, with the first four years in prison and the remaining term in a maximum security penal colony, with restrictions on freedom after serving the sentence for a period of one year.

In early May 2024, it became known that Arifmemetov was transferred to the Minusinsk prison in the Krasnoyarsk Krai of Russia. In May 2025, the journalist reported in his letter that he had been taken from Minusinsk prison and was being transferred to Penal Colony No. 5 in Novotroitsk, Orenburg region.

Arifmemetov’s health has deteriorated sharply in prison: he suffers from kidney disease, osteoarthritis, prostatitis, and damage to his lower limbs.

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

#FreeArifmemetov



Ruslan Suleimanov

Citizen journalist and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, imprisoned since March 2019.

By profession – a physics teacher. Suleimanov lived in the Simferopol district of Crimea. He covered human rights violations in Crimea, for which he was detained in 2017 and 2019. He taught physics lessons to children of political prisoners. His three-year-old son Musa tragically died in 2020.

In March 2019, Russian security forces detained Suleimanov during a search of his home. In July 2019, he underwent a forced psychiatric examination. He faced trumped-up charges of organising the activities of a terrorist organisation. Suleimanov was held in a pre-trial detention centre in Rostov-on-Don. On November 24, 2022, the Southern District Military Court of the Russian Federation found him guilty and sentenced him to 14 years, with the first 4 years in prison and restrictions on freedom after serving the sentence for one year.

He is currently in prison in Verkhneuralsk, Chelyabinsk region of the Russian Federation, where he has been classified as “supportive of extremism” and “prone to escape and attack”. In May 2025, it became known that Suleimanov had been transferred to Penal Colony No. 17 in Murmansk, where he was again placed on a professional watch list due to the “seriousness of the charges”.

“After 2014, an active layer of the people was declared terrorists and extremists, and people went missing and were tortured to death for their position. This is Reshat Ametov, this is the case of Vedzhyie Kashka – when the detention of elderly activists led to her death, numerous criminal cases and pressure on activists and Crimean Tatars” – Ruslan Suleimanov, May 20, 2020.

#FreeSuleymanov



Amet Suleimanov

Citizen journalist and streamer for the Crimean Solidarity public association, he had been under house arrest in the temporarily occupied Crimea since March 2020. In April 2023, he was transferred to a pre-trial detention centre and then sent to serve his sentence to the Russian Federation.

By profession – a sales manager in a mobile phone shop. Suleimanov lived in Bakhchysarai. He covered searches and arrests of Crimean Tatars, for which he was detained twice by the occupation authorities in 2017 and 2019. After that, he was forced to limit his activities due to heart disease.

In the spring of 2020, Russian security forces detained him on trumped-up charges of participating in the activities of a terrorist organisation. Due to his health condition, he was placed under house arrest during the trial in the courts of first instance and appeal. In 2021, he was sentenced to 12 years in prison. On February 9, 2023, the Court of Appeal upheld this sentence, and on April 5, he was taken into custody and sent to a pre-trial detention centre in Simferopol. There, his medication was taken away from him and he was not allowed to lie down despite his poor health. On September 27, it became known that Amet Suleimanov was transferred to Russia to the prison in Vladimir.

After the sentence and transfer to the territory of the Russian Federation to the Vladimir Central Prison, Amet Suleimanov's condition deteriorated significantly. He urgently needs surgery to replace his heart valve. On March 29, 2024, the court in Vladimir refused to release him from prison, although Suleimanov's medical records contain information about diseases that a person should not be imprisoned with.



In July 2025, Amet Suleimanov suffered a hypertensive crisis. Since then, he has been complaining of chest pain, rapid fatigue and general weakness. Spots have appeared on his face, the cause of which is unknown.

“Today, Crimea has become not a “breeding ground for terrorism”, as some people want to present it. It has become a breeding ground for brave men and women who are ready to tell the truth and stand up for justice even under the threat of imprisonment, torture and abduction” – Amet Suleymanov, April 27, 2021.

#FreeSuleymanov

Rustem Sheikhaliev

Citizen journalist and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity public association, imprisoned since March 2019.

He lived in Simferopol district of Crimea and worked as an entrepreneur. Since 2015, he has been covering human rights violations in Crimea. He attended court hearings, helped families of political prisoners and organised the purchase of parcels for prisoners.

In March 2019, Russian security forces detained him during a search at his home. Sheikhaliev faced trumped-up charges of participation in the activities of a terrorist organisation. He was held in a pre-trial detention centre in Rostov-on-Don. On November 24, 2022, the Southern District Military Court of Rostov-on-Don found him guilty and sentenced him to 14 years, with the first 4 years in prison. Sheikhaliev has health problems and does not receive proper medical care. During the sentencing in court, an ambulance was called for him.

For some time, Rustem Sheikhaliev was imprisoned in the city of Yeniseisk in the Krasnoyarsk Krai of the Russian Federation. From there, he managed to communicate with his wife and children via email. Phone calls were prohibited.

In May 2025, Sheikhaliev was transferred to Penal Colony No. 3 in the village of Serednobila in the Amur region of the Russian Federation.

“Many people are surprised by the support of our people and say: “I’ve never seen anything like it”. I answered: if you take one, ten will come, if you take ten, a hundred will come, and if you take a hundred, a thousand will come. This is the kind of people we have, as a single organism, with such traditions of support” – Rustem Sheikhaliev, May 24, 2019.

#FreeSheykhaliev



Asan Akhtemov

Citizen journalist of the Nefes initiative, previously worked for the Crimean Tatar newspaper Avdet. Imprisoned since September 2021.

He lived in Simferopol and attended court cases of Crimean Tatars as well as supported relatives of those who were arrested. He organised a project about civic activists who remained in Crimea after occupation and was involved in socio-cultural projects.

He was detained by Russian security forces in September 2021 in a case that also involved the first deputy chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, Nariman Dzhelial. He was tortured to extract a confession of complicity in an alleged “sabotage” that allegedly took place at a gas pipeline in Crimea in the village of Perevalne on August 23 of the same year. A lawyer was allowed to see him only 10 days after his detention.



Asan Akhtemov was held in a pre-trial detention centre in Simferopol. On 21 September 2022, the court handed down a sentence of 15 years' imprisonment, a fine of 500,000 roubles, and one year of restriction of liberty following the completion of the main term of punishment. The court of appeal subsequently tightened the detention conditions by ordering that the first three years be served in prison.

On 2 October 2023, it became known that Asan Akhtemov had been transferred to Russia to the Vladimir Central Prison, and in March 2025, to Penal Colony No. 5 in Koryazhma, Arkhangelsk region. While in prison, Akhtemov began to experience health problems: his eyesight deteriorated significantly, and he developed pain in his back and knees.

“*My main dream in life is to live in Crimea and see my people flourish and be happy. I believe it will happen. I am infinitely grateful to all the people who support us in these difficult times. Only thanks to you I do not give up*” – Asan Akhtemov, October 5, 2021.

#FreeAkhtemov

Iryna Danylovych

Citizen journalist who collaborated with many independent media outlets, including the INzhir media project and the Crimean Process initiative, she has been imprisoned since April 2022.

She lived in the village of Vladyslavivka near Feodosia. She worked as a nurse in Koktebel. Iryna was engaged in citizen journalism and published anonymously. She covered the rights of healthcare workers and also collaborated with publications that covered political trials in occupied Crimea.

On April 29, 2022, she was abducted by four plainclothes Russian security forces, as recorded on video. At the same time, her house was searched and all her equipment was seized. There was no contact with her for 13 days. As it turned out, Danylovych was held in an FSB building for eight days, where she was subjected to a polygraph test, threatened, and given food only once a day. On the 13th day, her family was informed that Iryna was being held in a pre-trial detention centre in Simferopol. She was charged with “illegal storage of explosives”. In July 2022, she reported being beaten by FSB guards and subjected to psychological pressure by Russian security forces.

In the Simferopol pre-trial detention centre, Danylovych fell ill with otitis, but despite her serious health condition, the court continued to hear the case. On 28 December 2022, the Feodosia City Court sentenced her to seven years' imprisonment and a fine of 50,000 roubles. During the proceedings, the judge deliberately refused to allow Iryna Danylovych to receive medical assistance, as a result of which she was forced to go on hunger strike in March 2023. Danylovych was then examined by doctors, who confirmed her hearing loss and the need for treatment.

On June 29, 2023, the Court of Appeal “mitigated” the sentence, reducing the term of imprisonment by one month. In August 2023, Danylovych was transferred to Russia to a general regime colony in the city of Zelenokumsk, Stavropol Krai.

On May 14, 2024, the Russian Court of Cassation finally upheld the sentence of Crimean activist Iryna Danylovych to almost seven years behind bars.

On 1 August 2024, Iryna's father, Bronislav Danylovych, died in occupied Crimea.

Iryna Danylovych is in critical condition, which can lead to death. She is not receiving adequate medical care. Now the woman is completely deaf in her left ear, has suffered at least one minor stroke and experiences constant dizziness.

In July 2025, Iryna Danylovych appealed through her relatives to the Vice-President of the European Parliament, Pina Picierno, asking her to draw attention to the mass abuse in the Russian women's colony where she is being held. According to her, the administration of this colony creates “endless hell” for the prisoners.



“ Truth is the most powerful, most dangerous weapon against the state machine and against lies... A totalitarian regime does not need people who speak the truth, we have seen this more than once. Nor does it need people who think. For the most part, prisons are now filled with just such people. The regime sees in them a force that it will not be able to resist” – Iryna Danylovyh, December 27, 2022.

#FreeDanylovyh

Vilen Temerianov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity public association and correspondent for Grani.ru, imprisoned since August 2022.

He lived in the village of Vilne, Dzhankoi district. After the occupation of Crimea, he covered searches in the homes of Crimean Tatars and politically motivated trials. Prior to his imprisonment, the occupation authorities had detained him multiple times. In particular, in November 2021, during the mass detention of Crimean Tatars who greeted lawyer Edem Semedliaiev with flowers after serving an illegal arrest.

He was detained by Russian security forces on 11 August 2022 at his home, during a search of his home. The next day, he was remanded in custody and charged with fabricated charges of participating in a terrorist organisation.

Temerianov was held in a pre-trial detention centre in Simferopol and underwent a compulsory psychiatric examination. On 20 April 2023, he was transferred to pre-trial detention centre No. 1 in the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don. Now, the Southern District Military Court is conducting a trial against him and five other Crimean Tatars. Temerianov was charged with ties to the organisation Hizb ut-Tahrir. He faces up to 13 years in prison.

The journalist has lost almost all of his teeth and requires urgent dental treatment.

“ Over all these years, I have realised that what is happening in Crimea is a new kind of intimidation of my people and another repression for their resilient stance and disagreement with Russia’s policies. As a sane person and a citizen journalist, I am showing patience and resilience in these difficult times for my people. I will stand up to the arbitrariness of the Russian judicial system and continue to do my best to cover the reality of Crimea with confidence and resilience. Strong people always arise in difficult and challenging times, and I hope I am one of them” – Vilen Temerianov, January 17, 2023.

#FreeTemeryanov

Yevhen Ilchenko

Administrator of the Telegram channel “Mylyi Topol”, arrested in July 2022 in occupied Melitopol.

Before the full-scale invasion, Yevhen was an entrepreneur and lawyer in Melitopol. During the occupation of the city, he started a Telegram channel where he covered local news, such as problems with supermarket supplies, the presence of occupiers on the streets of the city, and corruption in certain government agencies that issue travel permits.

On 10 July 2022, Russian security forces broke into Yevhen’s flat, searched it, and stole jewellery and documents. Ilchenko, who was out walking at the time, was arrested in his own yard immediately upon his return on charges of “terrorism”.

At first, he was held in the torture chambers of Melitopol, where he was subjected to constant torture, and then transferred closer to the front line to one of the settlements in the temporarily occupied part of



the Zaporizhzhia region, where Ilchenko was forced into labour, in particular, digging trenches under the supervision of Russian military personnel.

Yevhen Ilchenko is currently being held in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 2 in Taganrog under harsh conditions without any official charges.

“**Captured, tortured, and then reduced to slavery... In nearly 40 years of defending journalism, RSF has never documented a case where a journalist, blogger, or whistleblower has been subjected to total slavery and exploited to participate in military operations against their own country. Because he chose to inform, this man has not only been held captive for two years, but is also subjected to forced labour. We have gone from arbitrariness to disgrace. Yevhen Ilchenko must be released immediately**”, – Arnaud Froger, Head of the Investigation Desk of RSF, on 6 August 2024.

#FreeIlchenko

Iryna Levchenko

Journalist arrested in May 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

She worked for local and national print media, including the Melitopol district newspaper Novyi den. However, she stopped working as a journalist when she retired.

On 5 May 2023, Iryna and her husband Oleksandr stopped communicating. Iryna's relatives were unable to locate her for a long time. Iryna Levchenko was held in Melitopol for at least a year. In July 2025, it became known that the woman was being held in a Donetsk pre-trial detention centre and could soon be transferred to Simferopol for trial. It is unknown why the journalist was detained and under which articles she will be tried. Iryna's husband was released over a year ago and remains in occupied Melitopol.

“**We were told that she is holding on, alive, and is in Melitopol; they did not transfer her. We were told that she is fed twice a day, taken out for a walk and to the toilet twice a day, given dry rations, and that there is something like a bed for women. Those are the conditions**”, – Iryna Levchenko's sister Olena Rudenko on 16 July 2024.

#FreeLevchenko



Oleksandr Malyshev

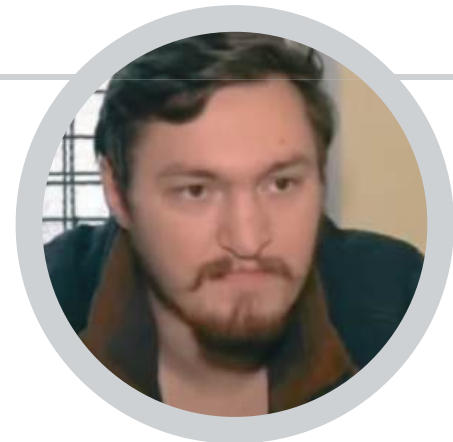
Administrator of the Telegram channel “Melitopol is Ukraine”, arrested in August 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

Russian security forces detained Oleksandr on 20 August 2023 along with other media workers in Melitopol. On 29 October 2023, the Russians released a video of the detention of media workers, featuring Oleksandr Malyshev, on propaganda media and Telegram channels.

On 2 June 2025, the Southern District Military Court registered a criminal case against Oleksandr. He is accused of “committing crimes” under Article 276 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (espionage); Part 2 of Article 205. 4 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (participation in a terrorist community); subparagraphs “a” and “v” of Part 2 of Article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorist act).

Malyshev is currently being held in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 2 in Mariupol.

#FreeMalyshev



Heorhii Levchenko

Administrator of the Telegram channel “RIA Melitopol”, arrested in August 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

Russian security forces detained the man on 20 August 2023 along with other media workers in Melitopol. In a press release dated 27 October 2023, the Russian FSB accused the journalist of allegedly passing information about Russian military personnel to Ukrainian special services. On 29 October 2023, the Russians released a video of the detention of media workers, featuring Heorhii Levchenko, on propaganda media and Telegram channels. He was allegedly held in a Mariupol pre-trial detention centre.

In March 2025, information appeared that the occupying “prosecutor’s office of the Zaporizhzhia region” had approved the indictment in the criminal case against Heorhii. He is accused of allegedly passing information to the Ukrainian special services and posting publications calling for the murder of members of fake “election commissions” and representatives of the occupying authorities. The Russian prosecutor’s office has charged Heorhii Levchenko with “high treason and public calls for extremist activity”.

On 2 September 2025, the occupation “Zaporizhzhia Regional Court” sentenced the journalist to 16 years’ imprisonment in a maximum security penal colony. He was accused of “high treason” and “extremism”. He was also banned from using the internet for a year.

He is no longer being held in Mariupol, but his new location is currently unknown.

“**This is not a trial, but a demonstration of political power. Russia is using its judicial system to criminalise independent journalism in the occupied territories. RSF calls for the immediate release of Heorhii Levchenko**” – Jeanne Cavalier, Head of the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Desk of RSF, on 4 September 2025.

#FreeLevchenko



Maksym Rupchov

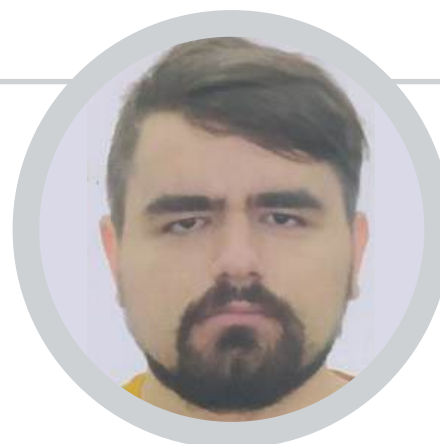
Administrator of the Telegram channel “Melitopol is Ukraine”, arrested in August 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

Russian security forces detained Maksym on 20 August 2023 along with other media workers in Melitopol. On 29 October 2023, the Russians released a video of the detention of media workers, featuring Maksym Rupchov, on propaganda media and Telegram channels.

On 2 June 2025, the Southern District Military Court registered a criminal case in which Maksym is accused of “committing crimes” under Article 276 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (espionage); Part 2 of Article 205. 4 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (participation in a terrorist community); subparagraphs “a” and “v” of Part 2 of Article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorist act).

He is currently being held in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 2 in Mariupol.

#FreeRupchov



Yana Suvorova

Administrator of the Telegram channel “Melitopol is Ukraine”, arrested in August 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

Yana was 19 years old at the time of her arrest and was studying at Melitopol Pedagogical University. Russian security forces detained her on 20 August 2023 along with other media workers in Melitopol. On 29 October 2023, the Russians released a video of the detention of media workers, featuring Yana Suvorova, on propaganda media and Telegram channels.

On 2 June 2025, the Southern District Military Court registered a criminal case against the journalist. She is accused of “committing crimes” under Part 2 of Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (justification of terrorism on the Internet) and Article 276 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (espionage).

She was initially held in Melitopol and Mariupol, and at the end of July 2025, she was transferred to a prison in Donetsk, where she was kept in appalling conditions: overcrowded cells, lack of air and water. In mid-August 2025, her relatives learned that she was being held in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 2 in Taganrog. However, this is temporary, as Yana Suvorova is ultimately scheduled to be transferred to Rostov.

“**I am in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 2 in Taganrog. I was supposed to be sent to Rostov, but at the last minute my transfer was cancelled without explanation. I am waiting for news like a sailor waits for a storm, and I am very anxious**”, – from a letter by Yana Suvorova, August 2025.

#FreeSuvorova



Anastasiia Hlukhovska

Journalist of the local publication “RIA Melitopol”, arrested in August 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

Before the occupation of the city, Anastasiia worked at the editorial office of RIA Melitopol, but after the occupation she stopped working there.

Russian security forces detained her on 20 August 2023 along with other media workers in Melitopol. Later, Russian television aired a report on the detention of a “Ukrainian agent group”, which showed the moment Anastasiia was detained in her apartment.

Since her arrest, Russian authorities, in particular the penitentiary service, have remained silent about her place of detention and have never responded to inquiries from her relatives. On 23 January 2025, representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross officially confirmed to her relatives that Anastasiia Hlukhovska was being held in Russian captivity, but did not specify the location. Anastasiia was probably held for some time in Pre-trial Detention Centre No. 2 in Taganrog, and is now in the Pre-trial Detention Centre in the city of Kizel in the Perm region.

“**The fact that she is still being held captive confirms that she has refused to cooperate with the occupying authorities. I understand that she is under intense psychological pressure. I think she will fight**”, – Anastasiia Hlukhovska’s sister Diana on 6 June 2025.

#FreeHlukhovska



Vladyslav Hershon

Author of the Telegram channel “Melitopol is Ukraine”, arrested in August 2023 in occupied Melitopol.

Before the occupation of the city, he worked remotely as a journalist for sports websites. During the occupation, he published local news on the Telegram channel “Melitopol is Ukraine”.

Russian security forces detained the man on 20 August 2023, along with other administrators and authors of this Telegram channel. On 29 October 2023, the Russians released a video of the detention of media workers, featuring Vladyslav, on propaganda media and Telegram channels.

At first, the journalist was held in various Melitopol torture chambers, then for a long time in the Mariupol pre-trial detention centre. On 15 May 2025, the Southern District Military Court registered a criminal case in which he was accused of “committing crimes” under Article 276 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (espionage) and Part 2 of Article 205. 4 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (participation in a terrorist community); subparagraphs “a” and “v” of Part 2 of Article 205 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation (terrorist act).

On 3 September 2025, Vladyslav was sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment in a maximum security penal colony. Vladyslav Hershon is being held in a pre-trial detention centre in Rostov, where he is being kept in appalling and inhumane conditions. Letters to his family have become less frequent since his transfer to Rostov.

“**Every morning is hell**”, –
from a letter by Vladyslav Gershon, 2025.

#FreeHershon



Rustem Osmanov

Citizen journalist of the Crimean Solidarity association, imprisoned in the occupied Crimea since March 2024. He lived in Bakhchysarai and was a former employee of the Crimean Tatar TV channel ATR.

On 5 March 2024, the occupying Kyiv District Court of Simferopol, in a closed session, issued a ruling to arrest the journalist for two months and place him in Simferopol Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 2 on charges of organising and participating in the activities of a terrorist organisation. After that, the term of arrest was extended several times. The criminal case against Rustem Osmanov was opened in the Southern District Military Court.

The journalist is currently being held in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 1 in Rostov-on-Don.

“**We are in an unpleasant position. Not because we are bad and have committed any atrocities. No! We were not raised that way!**” – from a letter by Rustem Osmanov, March 24, 2024.

#FreeOsmanov



Aziz Azizov

Citizen journalist and streamer of the Crimean Solidarity association, imprisoned in the occupied Crimea since March 2024.

He lived in Bakhchysarai and was a construction worker.

He was imprisoned together with Rustem Osmanov on March 5, 2024, when the Kyiv District Court of Simferopol under occupation authorities ordered the arrest of two journalists for two months, placing them in Simferopol's Detention Centre No. 2 on charges of organising and participating in the activities of a terrorist organisation. After that, the arrest was extended several times.

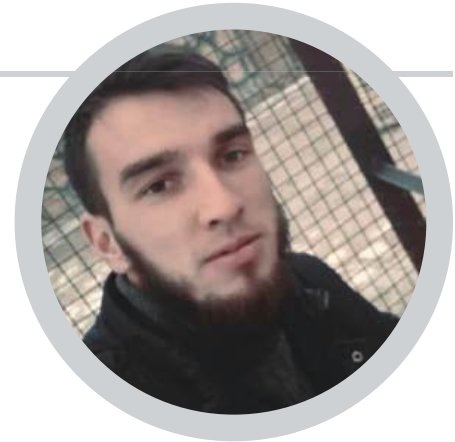
On 2 May 2024, it became known that Aziz Azizov had been sent to a psychiatric hospital for inpatient psychiatric examination without any apparent medical indications.

The criminal case against Rustem Osmanov was opened in the Southern District Military Court and registered on 8 October 2024.

The journalist is currently being held in Pre-Trial Detention Centre No. 5 in Rostov-on-Don.

“*Writing about myself here is like yet another complication on top of everything else... But the Earth keeps rotating without stopping, and this is all temporary; it will pass and come to an end. I ask the Almighty to make this happen as soon as possible and for the best, so let's not despair and keep moving on*” – from Aziz Azizov, July 28, 2024.

#FreeAzizov



Hennadii Osmak

Journalist arrested in March 2024 in occupied Henichesk.

Prior to the full-scale invasion, he was the editor-in-chief of the local online publication “Novyi vizyt”.

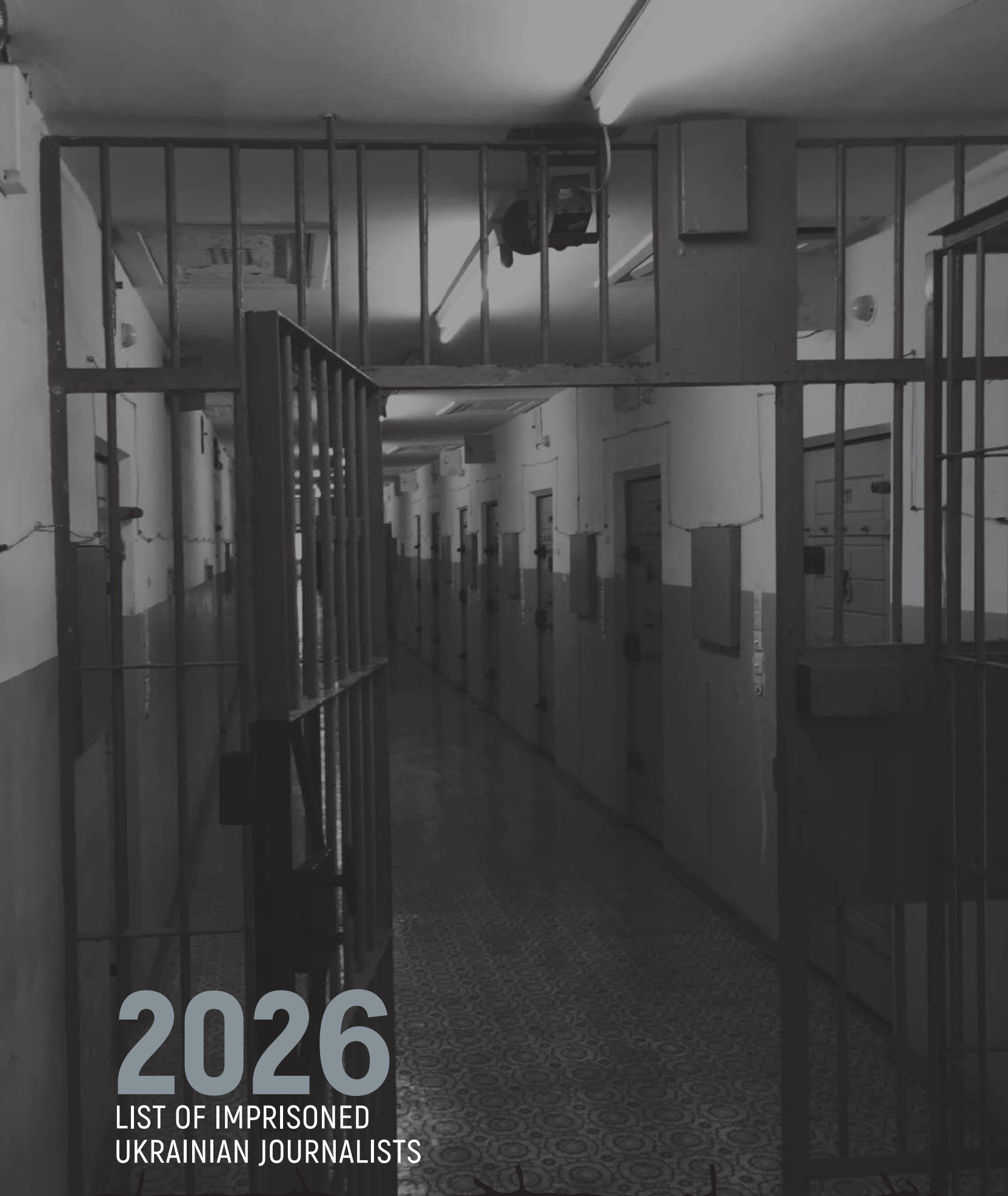
Russian security forces detained Hennadii Osmak on 6 March 2024. After his detention, he was subjected to horrific torture. The journalist was accused of participating in the Crimean Tatar battalion named after Noman Çelebicihan, which Russia has declared a “terrorist organisation”. In March 2025, the occupation “Kherson Regional Court” sentenced the journalist to 3.2 years in a maximum security penal colony.

Hennadii is now being held in a pre-trial detention centre in Chonhar, Kherson region. He has diabetes and serious spinal problems.

“*This is revenge for him covering events on the administrative border with Crimea. Revenge for his journalistic activities. Revenge for his refusal to be a mouthpiece for Russian propaganda*”, – sources of the CTRC, 11 April 2025.

#FreeOsmak





2026

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