

## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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# UKRAINE/OCCUPIED CRIMEA: HUMAN RIGHTS LAWYERS' OFFICES TARGETED BY RUSSIAN ANTI-EXTREMISM AND RIOT POLICE

On 11 December 2025, officers from the Russian Interior Ministry's Centre for Combating Extremism ("Centre E") and riot police raided and searched two offices used by lawyers in the occupied Crimea. According to reports by the human rights initiative Crimean Solidarity and other credible, confidential sources, the search was arbitrary, intrusive and intimidating, and conducted with multiple procedural violations, resulting in direct and deliberate breach of the lawyer-client privilege.

The search activities were concurrent, lasting several hours. One of the searched locations was first entered by three plain-clothed men who claimed to be from the energy-supplying company. One of the men was filming the event on camera and forced his way into the lawyers' premises. They were soon followed by a group of police officers, from the Centre for Combating Extremism ("Centre E") accompanied by riot police in full gear, some 10-12 in total. They searched through the legal and administrative files, including those belonging to the lawyers who were not present at the time, and seized some of the documents, including confidential paperwork. Lawyers who were present in the office at the time were not allowed to leave nor make calls, and were forced to present the content of their mobile phones.

In the other location, lawyers working from that office were denied entry to their premises. The search team, similarly comprising anti-extremism and riot police, also searched through the paperwork and seized some documentation.

The police later presented the search warrant issued by the so-called Supreme Court of Crimea. The basis for the warrant was some vaguely-formulated allegation of some lawyers' "involvement" in alleged criminal offences under Articles 205.5, 205.1 and 199 of the Russian criminal code (terrorism-related activities and tax evasion). However, the exact nature of these allegations was unclear, and according to those present during the search it was apparent that the search teams were not clear as to what they were looking for.

The search has targeted the lawyers who are well-known for their human rights work in the Crimean Tatar community, all of whom are Crimean Tatars themselves, including Edem Semedlyev, Emil Kurbedinov, Lilia Gemedzhi, Nazim Sheikhmambetov, Rustem Kyamilev and others. Many of them have faced harassment and reprisals in connection with their professional work on numerous past occasions, including intimidation, intrusive searches, arbitrary arrest and detention, and unfounded disciplinary proceedings and disbarment.

The search is part of the long-standing pattern of harassment, intimidation and reprisals targeting human rights lawyers who have been confronting the de facto Crimean and Russian authorities over violations of human rights of members of the Crimean Tatar community and other victims of politically motivated prosecution. They happen in the context of incessant harassment, intimidation and persecution of all dissent in the Russian-occupied Crimea.

The Russian authorities must immediately cease intimidation, harassment and unlawful pressure against lawyers and human-rights defenders in Crimea, respect independence of the legal profession, and fully comply with international human rights law. They should fully comply with the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers, which require that lawyers be able to perform their functions "without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference." All documentation unlawfully seized in the lawyers' offices must be immediately returned, and the confidentiality of the lawyer-client relationship respected. Human rights of every person in the Crimean peninsula, including the right to a fair trial, must be fully ensured.