

URGENT ACTION

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE AWAITING SENTENCE

The final hearing in the trial of Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants is expected soon. Emir-Usein Kuku is a Crimean Tatar who peacefully denounced the human rights violations taking place since the occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation. He has been in pretrial detention, separated from his wife and children, since February 2016, and is facing trumped-up charges which carry up to 25 years in prison. Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants are prisoners of conscience and should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

Prosecutor General of the Russian Federation
Yuriy Yakovlevich Chaika
Prosecutor General's Office
ul. B. Dmitrovka, d.15a
125993 Moscow GSP-3
Russian Federation
Fax: +7495 987 58 41/ +7495 692 17 25
Twitter: @Genproc

Dear Prosecutor General,

I am writing concerning the ongoing prosecution of Crimean Tatars **Emir-Usein Kuku, Muslim Aliev, Vadim Siruk, Enver Bekirov, Arsen Dzhapparov and Refat Alimo**. Emir-Usein Kuku is a human rights defender who is being prosecuted as a reprisal for his human rights work.

The six men stand accused of being members or organising a local group of Hizb ut-Tahrir, an organisation banned as "terrorist" in the Russian Federation. Emir-Usein Kuku has also been charged with "forcible seizure of power or forcible retention of power" (Article 278 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). There is no credible evidence that they have been involved in any internationally recognizable crime.

In violation of international humanitarian law, they have been prosecuted under Russian criminal law, and transferred from Crimea to Rostov-on-Don, in Russia, where their case is being heard by a military court.

I urge you to take all necessary steps, within your authority as the Prosecutor General, to ensure that the trumped-up charges against Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants are dropped and that they are released immediately and unconditionally.

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 charged with 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.

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

Emir-Usein Kuku was arrested on 11 February 2016 and charged with "organising of activities of a terrorist organization" for his alleged association with Hizb ut Tahrir, an Islamic movement which is listed 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 law Russian enforcement officials 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. Since then they have been standing trial before a military court, which may also constitute a violation of their right to a fair trial.

In the beginning of 2017, Emir-Usein Kuku faced new charges of "conspiring to forcibly seize" or "retain" power, but there is no credible evidence that he or his co-defendants were planning or carrying out any violent acts. He faces up to 25 years in prison if found guilty.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Russian.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 14 November 2019

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).