

URGENT ACTION

LENGTHY JAIL TERMS FOR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

On 12 November, a Russian military court found Crimean Tatar human rights defender Emir-Usein Kuku and his five co-defendants guilty of trumped-up charges. After a protracted unfair trial, they have been given prison sentences of between seven and 19 years in jail. Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants are prisoners of conscience and they should be released immediately and unconditionally.

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

Military Prosecutor, Lt.-Gen. Sergei Kolomiyets
Southern Military Region
Pushkinskaya Street, 72/korpus A
Rostov-on-Don 344002
Russian Federation
Fax: +7 (863) 2827968
Email: vp_uvo_aho@gvp.rsnet.ru

Dear Military Prosecutor,

I am appalled by the sentencing of **Emir-Usein Kuku, Muslim Aliyev, Vadim Siruk, Enver Bekirov, Arsen Dzhepparov and Refat Alimov** on 12 November 2019 to long prison terms.

Since their arrest, more than three years ago, the rights of these men have been repeatedly and seriously violated. Their prosecution under Russian criminal law before a military court violates international humanitarian law and their right to a fair trial. The charges against them are trumped-up, and no credible evidence of any internationally recognizable crime has been provided against them during their protracted trial.

Despite this, they have been found guilty by the Southern District Military Court of “organizing of the activities of a terrorist organization” and “attempted forcible seizure of power” (Part 2 of Article 205.5, Article 30, and Article 278 of the Russian Criminal Code) and given lengthy prison sentences: Muslim Aliyev has been sentenced to 19 years in a penal colony, Enver Bekirov to 18 years, Vadim Siruk and Emir-Usein Kuku to 12 years each, Refat Alimov to eight years and Arsen Dzhepparov to seven years.

This prosecution follows a pattern of persecution of members of the Crimean Tatar community and all dissenting voices, following the Russian annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. Emir-Usein Kuku is a human rights defender and prominent member of the Crimean Tatar community who has been vocal exposing human rights violations and evidence of coercion and threats to the members of the community.

I am calling for an immediate and unconditional release of Emir-Usein Kuku and his co-defendants, and urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that they are freed and that their sentences are quashed.

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 prosecuted under 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 or paramilitaries acting as their proxies.

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

Emir-Usein Kuku was arrested on 11 February 2016 and charged with "organising activities of a terrorist organization" for his alleged association with Hizb ut Tahrir, an Islamic movement which is banned 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 Russian law enforcement officers, 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, also in violation of their right to a fair trial.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: English and Russian.

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 25 December 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).

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur46/1098/2019/en/>