



CRIMEA SITUATION REPORT

MARCH 2021

Starting from 20 March, only Russian citizens and legal entities can own land in most parts of Crimea. Courts passed 5 sentences in politically motivated criminal cases. There were 14 searches and 3 arrests in Crimea. 3 political prisoners were sent to psychiatric assessment, another 3 were put into solitary confinement. Political prisoner Hlib Shablîi got released, 2 Jehovah's Witnesses were released under house arrest. 11 Crimean Tatar prisoners were subjected to linguistic discrimination, 5 – to religious discrimination. Occupying authorities continue issuing warnings to Crimean activists. Territories of Foros park and Cape Mehanom are being used for construction. New violations against the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses were recorded.

3 political prisoners were sent to psychiatric assessment; another 3 were put into solitary confinement. There are already 3 Crimean Muslims (**Ernest Ibrahimov, Azamat Eiupov, Lenur Seidametov**) out of 6 detained after searches on February 17, 2021, who were forced to go through a psychiatric assessment. Terms in disciplinary cells were again extended for **Muslim Aliiev** and **Tymur Abdullaiev**. **Andrii Kolomiets** was also placed into a disciplinary cell (details [here](#) and [here](#)).

Three political prisoners were released from detention facilities. **Hlib Shablîi** got released after serving a 5-year prison term. A court changed the pre-trial restriction for Jehovah's Witnesses **Volodymyr Sakada** and **Ihor Shmidt**. They were released from custody and put under house arrest.

11 Crimean Tatar prisoners were subjected to linguistic discrimination, 5 – to religious discrimination. 11 accused in the 2nd [Simferopol Hizb ut-Tahrir case](#) were evicted from the courtroom for speaking Crimean Tatar language (details [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#)). 5 accused within the same criminal case were given a meal ration that included pork fat.

Occupying authorities continue issuing warnings to Crimean activists. The prosecutor's office sent a letter to an activist **Akhmadzhon Kadyrov** saying that a [video address](#) by the elders of the Crimean Tatar people in support of political prisoners contains public calls to extremism. Besides, the court found **Sevilia Omerova** (wife of a political prisoner **Riza Omerov**) guilty of an administrative offence for a [single-person protest](#) in support of political prisoners and issued a [warning](#) to her.

Territories of Foros park and Cape Mehanom are being used for construction. Trees are being chopped down in the Foros park (details about its values [here](#) and [here](#)) for the construction of a children's sports complex. A local teacher **Maryna Rikmen** recorded a [video address](#) to Vladimir Putin, asking to stop the destruction of the park. As a result, law enforcement officers started [visiting](#) protestors and conduct "preventive conversations" with them. Besides, the [Perepelyne field](#) that had been home to rare plants was destroyed due to the construction on the Cape Mehanom (details [here](#) and [here](#)).

New violations against the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Muslims, and Jehovah's Witnesses were recorded. The Crimean Eparchy of the OCU received another [order](#) by court inspectors that demand the demolition of the church in Yevpatoria before 24 March. It also became known in March that a Bilohirsk court [issued a fine](#) to imam **Murtaza Abliazov** for leading Friday prayer. Russian security officials also came with a [check](#) to the mosque in Alushta. In addition, there were 13 searches and 2 arrests of Jehovah's Witnesses (see a paragraph about searches and arrests).

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Starting from 20 March, only Russian citizens and legal entities can own land in most parts of Crimea. According to the last year's "land order" by Vladimir Putin, all persons who had not received Russian citizenship or had not surrendered their land ownership rights for money reward, their land will be subjected to mandatory confiscation (more details [here](#)).

Courts passed 5 sentences in politically motivated criminal cases. A pro-Ukrainian activist **Oleh Prykhodko** was [convicted](#) to 5-year imprisonment for an alleged preparation for terrorist attack and manufacture of explosives. **Medzhyt Abliamitov** was [convicted](#)¹ to 6-year imprisonment for alleged membership in a [volunteer battalion of Noman Çelebicihan](#). 66-year old **Halyna Dovhopola** was [sentenced](#) to 12-year imprisonment for alleged high treason. A Crimean **Enver Topchi** was [fined](#) 40 thousand RUB for an alleged failure to report a crime. **Viktor Stashevskiy** was [convicted](#) to 6.5 years in prison for belonging to Jehovah's Witnesses.

There were 14 searches and 3 arrests in Crimea. On 10 March, the FSB officers [detained](#) an activist **Yelyzaveta Pavlenko** and a journalist of "Radio Liberty" **Vladyslav Yesypenko** ([video of detainment](#)). Pavlenko was released after a search in her home. Yesypenko was taken into custody on suspicions of espionage "in favor of Ukrainian security services" and illegal manufacture of weapon and ammunition. Yesypenko's independent defender was not allowed to visit his client on the grounds that Yesypenko had allegedly refused of his services. He also suffered two-day [tortures with the use of electrocution](#). In addition, on 11 March, Russian law enforcement bodies [searched 13 homes of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yalta](#). One believer, **Taras Kuzio**, was detained on suspicions of "financing an [extremist organization](#)" and put under [house arrest](#). One more Jehovah's Witness from Sevastopol was [taken into custody](#) after the conviction (see a paragraph about court sentences).

¹ Hereinafter, all state bodies in the territory of the occupied Crimea and their representatives are mentioned on the understanding that they are under the control of the occupying Russian authorities and are not legitimate from the point of view of Ukrainian and international law.