



# CRIMEA SITUATION REPORT

## SEPTEMBER 2020

In Crimea, schoolchildren cannot exercise the right to study their native language, and persons that have Ukrainian passports are forced to give them up. The occupying authorities imposed harsh water consumption restrictions; decided to forcibly purchase private wells and desalinate saltwater. The number of COVID-19 infections in Crimea has reached new record highs. 7 Crimean Tatar activists were given prison sentences ranging from 13 to 19 years. The historical monument in Feodosia is in decay due to the inaction and negligence of the occupation authorities.



*CrimeaSOS records cases of ethnic discrimination*

**CrimeaSOS records cases of ethnic discrimination in Crimea.** In September, there was a case of pressure from the school administration on the parents of schoolchildren aimed at pressuring them to sign a statement in which they opt for teaching their children in Russian instead of Crimean Tatar. Internal sources of CrimeaSOS reported that similar situations took place in other schools. The occupying authorities put pressure on the holders of Ukrainian passports to give them up.



*The situation with a shortage of fresh water is getting drastic*

**The situation with a shortage of fresh water in Crimea is getting drastic.** According to the officials, Simferopol has water for two more months with the water consumption restrictions in place. 6 Crimean riverbeds have completely dried up (more details here, here and here). The North Crimean Canal is gradually falling apart<sup>1</sup>. In some Crimean regions, water is available only for short hours according to the schedule installed in August. But the schedule is not observed and people are left without water for days. Crimeans complain about the quality of the tap water: a black liquid with a pungent odor. In an attempt to resolve the water crisis, the occupying authorities decided to forcibly purchase privately-owned springs, drill new wells and build a seawater desalination plant. These actions pose serious environmental risks.



*The number of COVID-19 infections in Crimea has reached new record highs*

**In September, the number of COVID-19 infections in Crimea has reached new record highs.** Despite the number of infections, occupying authorities organized mass sports and entertainment events. In several schools, teachers infected with COVID-19 gave lessons. After this became known, one of the groups of children in contact with the teacher was not ordered quarantine. Crimeans do not have access to quality medical care. Against the backdrop of a shortage of medical workers on the peninsula, the incidence of pneumonia is growing. Its highest number was recorded in Simferopol. Osman Seytumerov, a defendant in the 3rd Bakhchisarai “Hizb ut-Tahrir case”, was diagnosed with pneumonia, he was put in the medical unit of the detention center.

<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting that in response to a manipulative statement by the Russian authorities about Ukraine's obligation to provide Crimeans with water, the UN Monitoring Mission in Ukraine stated that “Russia is primarily responsible for ensuring access to water for protected persons in Crimea”.

**The occupying authorities grossly violate the rights of Crimean political prisoners.** On September 2, during the court hearing in the Belogorsk “Hizb ut-Tahrir case”, yet another hidden witness was questioned by the prosecutor. His testimony was identical to the previous testimony of the other secret witness.



*The occupying authorities grossly violate the rights of Crimean political prisoners*

On September 9-10, there were court hearings in the 2nd Bakhchisarai “Hizb ut-Tahrir case”. The defendants were not provided with food for the whole day. The judges interrupted the defendants when they were saying their last words before the verdict. On September 16, the Southern District Military Court of the Russian Federation delivered a verdict against the defendants in the case. All, except Ernes Ametov, were sentenced to prison terms ranging from 13 to 19 years. Ernes Ametov was found not guilty. An administrative case was initiated against the mother of one of the defendants (Server Mustafayev) for holding a solitary protest against the prosecution of her son.



*7 Crimean Tatar activists were convicted to prison sentences ranging from 13 to 19 years*

The administrations of places of detention do not provide the necessary medical assistance to political prisoners Remzi Memetov, Zevri Abseitov, and Rustem Sheikhaliev (see more details here and here) and fail to give the parcel with medicines to Oleg Prikhodko for more than 2 weeks.



*The 14th-century architectural landmark of Feodosia is close to collapse due to the occupying authorities' negligence*

The 14th-century architectural landmark of Feodosia, the Genoese Tower of St. Thomas, is close to collapse. The occupying authorities do not take any measures to prevent its deterioration.

**In violation of Art. 51 of the Geneva Convention IV, Russia persecutes Crimeans for refusing to serve in its army.** In August, there were 5 new criminal cases and 8 verdicts against Crimeans for evading military service in the Russian army.



*In violation of IHL, Russia persecutes Crimeans who refuse to serve in the Russian army*