

21

Aug
2020

▲ Lvl. 1

State replied

Ukraine

n° 150/2019

Alert created on: 20 Dec 2019

Crimean Tatar Journalist Nariman Memedeminov Sentenced to 2.5 Years in Jail on Terrorism Charges

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

📍 1 Journalist in detention

CATEGORY ⓘ ▶ Detention and imprisonment of journalists

PARTNER: CPJ, EFJ/IFJ

All activities of the Council of Europe concerning the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol are being undertaken in compliance with the terms of decision CM/Del/Dec(2014)1196/1.8 and subsequent decisions of the Committee of Ministers condemning the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation and upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

On 22 March 2018, officers of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) detained Nariman Memedeminov, an ethnic Crimean Tatar freelance journalist, at his home in Kholmivka, Bakhchisaray district of Crimea, according to Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), which cited his wife, Lemara Memedeminova. The FSB seized electronic equipment and books and placed him in pre-trial detention in Simferopol, Crimea, according to RFE/RL.

Memedeminov reported on the activities of Crimea's indigenous Crimean Tatar population, a Muslim minority, and on alleged violations of human rights by authorities of the Russian Federation in Crimea, posting videos on his YouTube channel and the YouTube channel of Crimean Solidarity, according to Krym.Realii (Crimea Realities) and a CPJ review of the videos. Crimean Solidarity helps Crimean political prisoners by publicising their prosecution and advocating for their release, according to the group's website. Memedeminov livestreamed the trials and home raids of Crimean Tatar activists, and interviewed their family members and lawyers, according to Krym.Realii.

Memedeminov was charged with public calls to terrorism on the internet, under Article 205.2 of

the Russian Federation's criminal code, the Ukrainian state news agency Ukrinform reports. The public prosecution claimed that three of Memedeminov's videos, including one from a meeting of the Islamist group "Hizb ut-Tahrir" dating back to 2013, before the Russian Federation annexed Crimea, called for terrorist activity, according to two reports by RFE/RL. "Hizb ut-Tahrir" operates legally in Ukraine, but is considered a terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation, according to Freedom House and RFE/RL. Memedeminov's 2013 videos feature calls to comply with the norms of Islam and express opinions on Russian Federation's national holidays, such as International Women's Day and Children's Day, according to RFE/RL and Ukrinform. The Ukrainian news site Zn.ua quoted the journalist's lawyer, Edem Semedlyayev, as saying that a group of Russians were asked to provide expert opinion on the videos' content. Semedlyayev said he questioned the group's conclusion and said that respected experts on Islam who were familiar with everyday life of devout Muslims as well as the specifics of Islam should have been involved in the case.

On 1 October 2019, Memedeminov denied the charges before the Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don, Russian Federation, RFE/RL reported. On 2 October 2019, he was convicted of public calls for terrorism on the internet and sentenced to two years and six months in prison, according to RFE/RL and HRW. On 14 October 2019, the journalist appealed, Semedlyayev told Krym.Realii.

Memedeminov is being held in a detention center in Rostov-on-Don, according to Ukrainian media. After he had filed several complains about pain, doctors examined him in February 2019 and scheduled a surgery on 14 March 2019, the Ukraine-based Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group (KHPG) reported. When the surgery was postponed, Ukraine's National Union of Journalists called it an "act of torture", and demanded Memedeminov's release. On 6 November 2019, Ukraine's consul general to Crimea, Taras Malyshevskiy, visited Crimean prisoners in Rostov-on-Don, according to Krym.Realii. CPJ phoned the Federal Ministry of the Interior's branch in Rostov-on-Don, but an officer on duty refused to give comments about the journalist, saying that information was available only to family members.

The Russian Federation has been enforcing its laws in Crimea since March 2014, including substantial restrictions on media freedom, according to Freedom House's 2019 "Freedom in the World" report. Under a registration process with the Russian media regulator Roskomnadzor, the number of media outlets in Crimea has been reduced by more than 90%, and Russian authorities have restricted access to Ukrainian TV and other media outlets. Many members of Crimea's indigenous Crimean Tatar population have openly opposed annexation by the Russian Federation, according to Krym.Realii, Freedom House and HRW.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



 [CPJ's annual report on jailed journalists 2019 : Nariman Memedeminov](#)

STATE REPLIES





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👉 Official position of Ukraine

FREELANCERS



Key information :

Nariman Memedeminov

JOURNALISTS IN DETENTION



Currently in detention (1):

Nariman Memedeminov