



EUROPEAN UNION

OSCE Permanent Council No. 1335 Vienna, 16 September 2021

EU Statement on the detention of five Crimean Tatar Leaders

1. The EU remains deeply concerned about the situation of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. The Russian de facto authorities' arbitrary targeting of Crimean Tatars and other residents, the application of Russian anti-extremism legislation and unduly lengthy prison sentences have become a persistent trend.
2. Since the illegal annexation of Crimea, the Crimean Tatars, who have suffered from repression and deportation in the past, have been unacceptably persecuted and pressured; their human rights have been gravely violated, including through the shutting down of Crimean Tatar media outlets, the banning of the activities of the Mejlis, their self-governing body, and through the persecution of its leaders and members of their community. We reiterate that all Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and all persons belonging to ethnic and religious communities in the peninsula must be able to maintain and develop their culture, education, identity and cultural heritage traditions, which are currently threatened by Russia's illegal annexation. Destructive actions against the peninsula's cultural heritage, such as archaeological treasures, artworks, museums or historical sites, which continue unabated, must stop.
3. The European Union condemns the fact that on 3 and 4 September Russian de facto authorities detained five Crimean Tatar leaders, Eldar Odamanov, Aziz Akhtemov, Nariman Dzhelial, Shevket Useinov and Asan Akhtemov, and more than 50 other people. We consider these detentions to be politically motivated and illegal under international law and call for their immediate release. We do not recognise the enforcement of Russian legislation in the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula and expect all illegally detained persons to be released without delay.

4. The European Union calls on the Russian Federation to comply with its obligations under international law and to stop human rights violations of Crimea residents, as also stated on 23 August 2021 in the Declaration of the International Crimea Platform.