

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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## **Ukraine: Conflict-Related Human Rights Abuses Need Urgent Action**

Amnesty International has documented violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights, including war crimes, committed by both sides in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, including by government forces, pro-government paramilitaries, and separatist forces. With minor exceptions, their perpetrators have enjoyed complete impunity. Most recently, Amnesty International has documented the practice of unlawful detention and ill-treatment of civilians by both sides.<sup>1</sup> Although some detainees have been released, neither side has addressed these violations. No member of the Ukrainian Security Service responsible for enforced disappearances, for example, has been brought to account. Amnesty International also remain deeply concerned about the fast-deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea, and the lack of access of international human rights monitoring mechanisms to the peninsula.

Amnesty International observes a growing number of politically-motivated criminal cases targeting dissenting voices in Crimea, often members of the indigenous Crimean Tatar community, under trumped-up charges relating to terrorism or extremism. Thus, Emir Usein-Kuku, a human rights defender from Yalta, and his five co-defendants are currently standing trial in a military court in Russia on such charges.<sup>2</sup>

Amnesty International has closely followed the case and attended some court hearings. The charges against Usein-Kuku and his co-defendants are spurious, intended in retaliation for refusing to “cooperate” with the de facto authorities and for peaceful opposition to the occupation of Crimea. They should be immediately and unconditionally released. And until they are, Amnesty International urges states and others to monitor and attend their hearings. The Russian Federation should fully respect the rights of all people in Crimea, and allow unobstructed access for international human rights monitoring mechanisms, including the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission to Ukraine.

### **Background:**

This public statement is based on the oral statement delivered by Amnesty International during the Interactive Dialogue on the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Report on Ukraine during the 37<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council on 21 March 2018 in Geneva.

Public Document

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<sup>1</sup> Ukraine: You Don’t Exist, Amnesty International report, EUR 50/4455/2016, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur50/4455/2016/en/> (accessed 21 March 2018);

<sup>2</sup> Crimean Tatar: Never Silent In the Face of Injustice, Amnesty International story page, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2018/02/crimean-tatar-hrd-emir-usein-kuku/> (accessed 21 March 2018);