

24 May 2018

Crimea: Arrest of human rights defender Server Mustafayev

On 22 May 2018, Kievsky District Court in the city of Simferopol ordered that human rights defender, **Server Mustafayev**, remain in pre-trial detention until 9 July. He was arrested the previous day for alleged involvement in Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is recognised as a terrorist organisation in the Russian Federation.

[Server Mustafayev](#) is a Tatar human rights defender and the coordinator of Crimean Solidarity, a civil society initiative created after the occupation of the Crimean peninsula by the Russian Federation and the repression of dissenting voices. Crimean Solidarity, created by the families of those imprisoned for opposing the occupation, has expanded quickly. It now monitors and documents human rights violations, provides legal aid, observes trials, and provides assistance - including financial - to families. Crimean Solidarity focuses mainly on providing support to the Crimean Tatar community, which has been particularly targeted by the Russian authorities.

On 21 May, at approximately 7:00am, masked policemen entered Server Mustafayev's home in the city of Bakhchisarai and began carrying out a search, which lasted approximately 3 hours. Some documents and electronic equipment were seized. Server Mustafayev was denied access to his lawyer during the search. He was arrested and brought to the Federal Security Department for interrogation where he was accompanied by his lawyer and provided with an interpreter.

At an in camera hearing on 22 May, Kievsky District Court ordered that Server Mustafayev remain in pre-trial detention on charges of "membership of a terrorist organisation" under Article 205.5.2 of the Penal Code of the Russian Federation. If convicted, he will face up to 10 years in jail. Hizb ut-Tahrir has been recognised as a terrorist organisation in Russia since 2003, but is not recognised as such under Ukrainian law.

[Emir Usein Kuku](#) is another Tatar human rights defender from Crimea who has been charged with membership of Hizb ut-Tahrir. He has been in pre-trial detention since February 2016 and his trial is now ongoing. He denies involvement with Hizb ut-Tahrir and believes his detention to be a reprisal for his human rights activity. Prior to his arrest, the authorities tried to recruit him as informant. He refused and publicly denounced their request.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the detention of, and charges against, Server Mustafayev, which it believes to be an attempt to intimidate the human rights defender and prevent him from continuing his legitimate work in defence of human rights in Crimea.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Crimea to:

1. Immediately drop all charges against Server Mustafayev as it is believed that they are solely motivated by his legitimate and peaceful work in defence of human rights;

2. Immediately and unconditionally release Server Mustafayev, as Front Line Defenders believes that he is being held solely as a result of his legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
3. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Crimea and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.