

# Crimea: Media Freedom Coalition statement

Media Freedom Coalition statement:

The undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition express their deep concern over the deteriorating media freedom situation in occupied Crimea, Ukraine, and the continued harassment, violence, and prosecution of journalists by the Russian Federation.

Despite the risks, human rights defenders and independent journalists continue to call attention to the ongoing violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and efforts to unduly restrict media freedom in the region. Such is the case with Vladyslav Yesypenko, a freelance journalist associated with the Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty 'Crimea.Reality' project, who had been reporting on social and environmental issues and filming the views of Crimean residents prior to his arrest by the Russian Federation's Federal Security Service (FSB) on March 10, 2021.

We are concerned by reports of mistreatment and abuse while Mr Yesypenko has been detained.

In addition, 9 Crimean Tatar citizen journalists, (Server Mustafayev, Tymur Ibrahimov, Marlen Asanov, Seyran Saliyev, Remzi Bekirov, Ruslan Suleymanov, Osman Aryfmemetov, Rustem Sheyhaliyev, Amet Suleymanov) are currently being held in pre-trial detention centers and prisons in Russia and occupied Crimea.

We call on the Russian Federation to immediately release Vladyslav Yesypenko and all journalists who have been unjustly detained for their work and to allow journalists and media workers to practice their profession without fear of persecution, arbitrary imprisonment, violence, and forced disappearance.

We are also concerned with Russia's efforts to stifle independent print and broadcast media on the peninsula through its continued harassment and intimidation which has effectively forced independent media underground or into exile.

Together with the international community, we will continue to shine a light on the Russian Federation's efforts to curtail media freedom in Crimea. We also bring attention to the continued and systematic restrictions on the freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information, faced by the residents of Crimea, one of the issues that the Crimea Platform initiative aims to address.

Signed by: Austria, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States