

[Press release: Statement on Ukrainian political prisoners held by Russian authorities](#)

Three Ukrainian nationals currently in Russian detention are on hunger strike to demand Russia release Ukrainian political prisoners.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned about the deteriorating health and welfare of three Ukrainian political prisoners; Oleg Sentsov, Volodymyr Balukh, and Emir-Huseyn Kuku.

The men were detained by the Russian authorities for expressing opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea. Mr Sentsov and Mr Balukh were given lengthy jail sentences following trials that have fallen well short of international standards. Mr Kuku is currently on trial.

We have seen increasingly worrying reports about the welfare and treatment of these men. Human rights monitoring organisations have been denied access to visit them and up to 70 other political prisoners being held in Crimea and the Russian Federation.

The Ukrainian ombudsman has also been denied access by Russian authorities despite an agreement between the Ukrainian and Russian Presidents.

UK Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

We remain concerned for the welfare of Oleg Sentsov, Volodymyr Balukh, and Emir-Huseyn Kuku, who are on hunger strike to demand Russia release Ukrainian political prisoners.

The imprisonment of these men and many more Ukrainians appears to be politically motivated and we call on the Russian authorities to release them immediately.

It is deplorable that the Russian authorities continue to deny access by International monitoring organisations to the detention facilities, even as the health of these prisoners deteriorates.

Further information