

# Russia's ongoing violations of human rights in illegally annexed Crimea, Ukraine: UK statement

Thank you Madam Chairperson. I'd like to thank the esteemed Ukrainian Ambassador for raising this important issue. The UK condemns the ongoing violation of human rights in illegally annexed Crimea and the persecution of Crimean Tatars in particular.

Tuesday 18 May marked the 77th anniversary of the Soviet Union's campaign to forcibly deport the entire Tatar population from their ancestral homeland of Crimea. Over 200,000 people were deported from the peninsular and more than 100,000 Crimean Tatars died due to starvation, mass diseases, abuse and hard labour. We remember the thousands of innocents who lost their lives and all those who endured great suffering as a result of this horrific action.

Sadly, the persecution of the Crimean Tatar community is not just a historical event. Today in illegally annexed Crimea, Crimean Tatars are systematically persecuted by the Russian de-facto authorities; subject to frequent intimidation, house raids, and arbitrary arrests. These are transparent attempts to suppress dissent to Russia's illegal annexation of the peninsular and it must stop.

Over the last two years, more than half of all politically motivated searches in Crimea took place in Crimean Tatar homes. 97 Crimean Tatars are currently facing politically motivated criminal prosecution and 80 are imprisoned with many held in Russian detention facilities, rendering access to their families and lawyers almost impossible.

Crimean Tatar activists are pursued on alleged terrorism and extremism charges, and forced to spend many years in prison due to these false accusations. This includes Enver Omerov, Ayder Dzhapparov, Riza Omerov, sentenced in January to 18, 17 and 13 years in prison respectively. We call on Russia to free all Ukrainian political prisoners now.

The Mejlis Council is an integral part of the Tatar identity and its banning is just another example of discrimination against Crimean Tatars. Crackdowns on the use and teaching of the Crimean Tatar language remain as Russia continues in its attempts to diminish Tatar heritage. We stand united with Ukraine in condemning unacceptable Russian aggression against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as against the Ukrainian people.

We call on Russia to comply with the International Court of Justice Order requiring Russia to "refrain from maintaining or imposing limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to conserve its representative institutions, including the Mejlis".

I take this opportunity to reiterate that the UK does not and will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. Crimea is Ukraine. We remain resolute in our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, including its territorial waters and highlight our support for the International Crimean Platform. We stand with Ukraine and with our international partners in calling on Russia to stop the persecution of Crimean Tatars and other violations of human rights in Crimea.