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**Persecution and violence against women in occupied Crimea**

Today, more and more attention is paid to women in the civilized world, their role in society and protection of their rights. However, women in the occupied Crimea found themselves in completely different conditions.

In Crimea, any civic activity that may cause doubts or criticism of the actions of the de facto authorities is persecuted. Thus, women on the peninsula cannot take an active part in public life, without risk of being detained or arrested.

The most vulnerable on the peninsula are the wives of political prisoners. There are 64 of them in Crimea today. In most cases, these are religious, not very wealthy, large families. After the arrest of the only breadwinner, the entire burden of responsibility for providing the family falls on women. In addition, large financial resources are required to pay the work of lawyers. In this regard, women from this population group cannot provide proper upbringing of children, and also deprived of the opportunity to full self-realization in society. These actions can be regarded as discrimination against the wives of political prisoners in Crimea by the occupation authorities.

A common form of psychological abuse is refusal to providing visits to the wives of political prisoners with their husbands. Often, they are deprived of the opportunity to see each other for several months. Besides the refusal to granting visits, political prisoners of Crimea are illegally transferred to the Russian Federation, usually to Rostov-on-Don. In this regard, wives of political prisoners have an additional financial burden in the form of transportation costs in order to be able to be present during so-called court hearings.

In addition to wives, daughters, sisters and mothers of political prisoners in these families are also subjected to psychological abuse.

For a long period of time, they are experiencing severe mental pain because their loved ones are unreasonably accused of criminal offenses, they are held in unsanitary, inhuman conditions, they are not provided with proper medical care. At the moment there are 119 mothers of political prisoners and 98 daughters in Crimea.

An example of the current situation on the peninsula is the case of Fatma Ismailova. On October 12, 2016, her husband Rustem Ismailov was arrested, he was accused of participation in the organization "Hizb ut-Tahrir" banned in Russia. June 10th 2019, when Fatma, together with her father Enver Omerov, went to Rostov-on-Don, where her husband's trial was to be held, her father was detained. Later, the same day, a search was carried out in the house of Fatma's brother Riza Omerov, who was also detained. Enver and Riza Omerov were also accused of participation in the organization "Hizb ut-Tahrir" banned in Russia. On June 18, 2019 Fatma's husband Rustem Ismailov was sentenced to 14 years, and on January

11, 2021, Enver Omerov was sentenced to 18 years and Riza Omerov to 13 years. Thus, Fatma Ismailova was left without support and care, father, brother and husband.

Another way to put pressure on active women in public life in Crimea was prosecution and charges in administrative offenses.

The persecution of activists of the Crimean Tatar people has become a negative trend. In November 2015, journalist Lilya Budzhurova was searched. In November 2017, a new search took place at the dwelling of the teacher of the Crimean Tatar language Lenara Mustafaeva. In June-July 2018, searches were conducted in the dwellings of blogger Elina Mamedova, Nazife Seytumerova, activist Nadzhie Kaidanova, blogger and daughter of the political prisoner Gulsum Aliieva. In June 2018, there was an attempt to initiate a criminal case against the Crimean Tatar poetess Aliye Kendzhe-Ali for her creative activities. On May 30, 2019, an activist of the Crimean Solidarity public association Lutfiye Zudiyeva and the wife of one of the political prisoners, coordinator of the Crimean Childhood project Mumine Saliieva were detained. They were found guilty of violating Article 20.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses of the Russian Federation (demonstration of the symbols of a prohibited organization) and were fined 2,000 and 1,000 rubbles, respectively. On August 1, 2019, Gulsum Khalilova, a journalist from the first Crimean Tatar TV channel ATR, was arrested in absentia and placed on the international wanted list. In 2020, wives of political prisoners are regularly reported on administrative violations for allegedly inappropriate behavior during their husbands’ trials, as a result of which they are fined. Administrative “cases” against the mother of the defendant of the second Bakhchisaray “case of Hizb ut Tahrir” Server Mustafaev, mother of the defendant of the Krasnogvardeisky “Hizb ut-Tahrir case” Arsen Abhairov and the mother-of-law of the second Bakhchisaray “Hizb ut-Tahrir case” Edem Smailov because of a single picket in support of relatives, were initiated. In the words of Lilia Gemedzhi, protocols related to Venera Mustafaeva were composed with violations of norms of the current administrative legislation. In particular, rights and obligations were not clarified. In 2021, in relation to Sevila Omerova, whose husband, father and brother were illegally sentenced, also an administrative case was initiated relating to her participation in a “court session” about her father. With respect to Zorja Emiruseinova and Emine Abdulganieva, mothers of political prisoners of the Krasnogvardeisky group of “Hizb ut-Tahrir case” also administrative cases were initiated due to holding individual pickets in support of their sons. Also, they and the Crimean Tatar women lawyers are regularly given warnings to prevent violation of extremist legislation.

Due to the fact that illegitimate, occupying authorities operate on the territory of the peninsula, women in Crimea are deprived of the opportunity to take an active part in political life and, subsequently, in decision-making regarding their communities and territories.

Having restored the Qurultay of the Crimean Tatar people in 1991, the indigenous Crimean Tatar people realized their right to preserve and govern their representative institution (Article 5 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

The Qurultay of the Crimean Tatar people (the highest representative body of the Crimean Tatar people, which is elected according to certain electoral democratic procedures). The Qurultay forms the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people (representative and executive body) according to certain parliamentary democratic procedures. The Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people in accordance with the UN ECOSOC 1995/317 decision of November 25, 1995 was recognized as an organization of the indigenous people and, as such, was admitted to the work of the UN. The Qurultay - Mejlis system is a democratic body that regulates all spheres of life of the Crimean Tatar people. Accordingly, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people is a representative institution of the indigenous people in the meaning of Articles 18-20 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

In accordance with Articles 18-19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples, states have a duty to consult with indigenous peoples through their representative institutions in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent before adopting and implementing legislative or administrative measures that may affect them, including those related to environmental protection, the use of natural resources, etc.

Technically, the implementation of the provisions of Articles 18-19 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is impossible, since by the decision of the so-called Supreme Court of the Republic of Crimea dated April 26, 2016, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, the representative body of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people, was banned. On April 19, 2017, the International Court of Justice issued an interim ruling in the case Ukraine v. Russia in the part of the complaint about the violation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which ordered Russia to restore the activities of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People - the representative body of the indigenous people of Crimea. However, the RF has not yet complied with this decision.

Traditionally, women of the Crimean Tatars took an active part in political life. For example, there were 4 women out of 80 delegates to the First Qurultay of the Crimean Tatar people in 1917. At the time of the occupation, out of 33 members of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, 4 are women, and out of 248 delegates of the Qurultay - 18 are women. Out of 2,500 thousand members of regional and local Mejlises, about 100 are women. Thus, due to the prohibition of the Mejlis, and the actions of the occupation administration of the Russian Federation in Crimea, hundreds of women of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people are limited in the right to exercise their own representative functions, since staying in this capacity on the territory of the Crimean peninsula threatens to be prosecuted as a member of an "extremist organization".

Thus, women of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people in Crimea are subjected to violation of their rights and psychological violence by the de facto authorities. We demand from Russia to stop these actions, as well as to stop illegal persecution of all residents of Crimea.