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Crimea (Ukraine): Crimean Tatar human rights defenders Lutfiye Zudiyeva and Kulamet Ibraimov detained while attempting to cover a court hearing and charged

On 27 July 2023, Crimean Tatar human rights defenders and journalists **Lutfiye Zudiyeva** and **Kulamet Ibraimov** were arbitrarily detained in Simferopol while trying to attend a trial at the Supreme Court of Russian-occupied Crimea, despite the fact that they both presented their journalists' credentials to law enforcement officers. Late at night on 27 July Zaliznychnyi district court of Simferopol ordered Lutfiye Zudiyeva and three other detainees to pay a fine and sentenced Kulamet Ibraimov to 5 days of administrative arrest.

[Lutfiye Zudiyeva](#) is a prominent Crimean Tatar woman human rights defender and member of the human rights movement Crimean Solidarity which monitors politically-motivated trials in Russian-occupied Crimea and supports political prisoners and their families. She also works as a journalist for the Ukrainian media outlet Graty. In September 2022, together with the editor-in-chief of Graty, she was shortlisted for the “Honour of the Profession” Ukrainian journalism award. In 2019, she cooperated with the film crew of the documentary about the repression of the Crimean Tatars “Tomorrow comes yesterday” (Turkey). Lutfiye Zudiyeva also founded the child development centre Elif in Dzhankoy, Crimea which organises educational events and activities for local children.

[Kulamet Ibraimov](#) is a human rights defender, member of Crimean Solidarity and a civic journalist with the Russian media outlet Grani.Ru who covers politically-motivated trials in Russian-occupied Crimea.

The human rights movement Crimean Solidarity was created on 9 April 2016 by the efforts of relatives of those arrested, lawyers and activists as an informal and peaceful human rights organisation to protect victims of repression on ethnic, religious and political grounds in Russian-occupied Crimea.

On 27 July 2023, Russian occupying police dispersed and arbitrarily detained 13 people who came to the Supreme Court of Russian-occupied Crimea to attend the appeal trial in the case of Nariman Dzhelal and the Akhtemov brothers who were illegally sentenced to 17, 15 and 13 years in prison. Those detained included the two journalists and human rights defenders Lutfiye Zudiyeva and Kulamet Ibraimov. As Graty reported, by order of the judge, no one was allowed to enter the court. A group of people wrote a complaint to the court about the restriction, after which 13 individuals were detained. A policeman announced that the duty officer had received a complaint, so people were detained “for identification purposes”.

The detainees were taken to the Zaliznychnyi district police precinct in Simferopol. Graty [reported](#) that Lutfiye Zudiyeva was threatened at the police precinct and police officers tried to forcibly take her fingerprints and saliva samples.

Eventually, the woman human rights defender Lutfiye Zudiyeva was charged with an administrative offence under Paragraph 1 of Article 20.2.2 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences stating that Lutfiye Zudiyeva took part in this gathering “with the purpose of media coverage of it” and “created an obstacle for pedestrian traffic” near the court building.

The human rights defender Kulamet Ibraimov was charged under Paragraph 4 of Article 20.2.2 of the Russian Code of Administrative Offences as reported by a local media outlet. On 25 January 2023, in front of the Kyivskiy District Court in Simferopol, the [human rights defender Kulamet Ibraimov](#) was jailed for 12 days after employees of the Russian Centre for Countering Extremism and Rosgvardiya fighters, acting on their command, carried out mass detentions of Crimean Tatars who came to the court hearings.

On 27 July 2023 the Zaliznychnyi district court of Simferopol [fined](#) the woman human rights defender Lutfiye Zudiyeva RUB 12,000 (approximately EUR 120) and sentenced the human rights defender Kulamet Ibraimov to five days of administrative arrest as he had previously been prosecuted under the same article in the performance of his human rights work. Reportedly five of the 13 detainees were charged with an administrative offence and others fined including the detained mother of Aziz Akhtemov, who was also fined RUB 12,000 and two other detainees were ordered to pay a fine of RUB 15,000.

Crimean Tatar politician and activist Nariman Dzhelal and two other Crimean Tatars Asan Akhtemov and Aziz Akhtemov were arrested in early September 2021, in Russian-occupied Crimea, in the case of so-called “sabotage of the gas pipeline” in Perevalsk, Crimea. On 21 September 2022, the Russian-controlled Supreme Court of Crimea announced the verdict in this case and the appeal is currently under consideration. Relatives of the defendants and concerned citizens came to the court during the appeal hearings, and journalists also tried to attend it. At the same time, the occupation authorities made attempts to limit the coverage of this case by postponing the hearings and preventing people from entering the court.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the judicial harassment of the Crimean Tatar human rights defenders and journalists Lutfiye Zudiyeva and Kulamet Ibraimov, who are part of the human rights movement Crimean Solidarity. Front Line Defenders strongly condemns the targeting of human rights defenders with the practice of detention and judicial harassment in Russian-occupied Crimea based on trumped-up charges. Front Line Defenders considers that the threats against Crimean Tatar human rights defenders and journalists are reprisals against their peaceful and legitimate human rights work on documenting and informing about human rights violations committed by the Russian Federation in the occupied territory.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities of the Russian Federation to:

1. Drop the charges against human rights defenders Lutfiye Zudiyeva and Kulamet Ibraimov as they were performing their legitimate work as journalists;
2. Immediately release Kulamet Ibraimov;
3. Take all necessary measures to ensure the physical and psychological security and integrity of Lutfiye Zudiyeva and Kulamet Ibraimov;
4. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the territory under de-facto control of the Russian Federation are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisal and free from all restrictions.