



The Militarization of Crimea under Russian Occupation

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In the time elapsed since Freedom House and the Atlantic Council released their joint report, *Human Rights Abuses in Russian-Occupied Crimea* in March 2015, the world's attention has shifted from the war in Ukraine to Europe's refugee crisis and Russian bombing raids in Syria. Meanwhile, Russian officials have steadily tightened their grip on Crimea, stepped up repression, and further militarized the peninsula.

Russia's annexation of Crimea unleashed a wave of lawlessness, brutality, and selective law enforcement directed primarily at ethnic, religious, and national groups seen to oppose the seizure of the peninsula, particularly the Crimean Tatars. Also targeted were journalists and private Ukrainian citizens who refused or failed to adopt Russian citizenship.

The Russian authorities aim to clear the peninsula of opponents to Russian rule or cow them into silence through increasingly repressive measures and militarization of the peninsula, which in turn serves the paramount goal of establishing Crimea as a Russian military asset.

Russia, therefore, continues to use all available levers of state power, such as selective application of the law and state sponsored propaganda, to ensure that the population around the Sevastopol military base in Crimea's west remains loyal. The Russian government has moved in massive numbers of new people, civilians and military, while driving into exile those deemed disloyal. Russian authorities have also disregarded the rights of Crimea's native people, the Crimean Tatars; coerced Crimean residents to accept Russian citizenship while renouncing Ukrainian citizenship; created

Ukraine in Europe Initiative

In response to Russia's seizure of Crimea in February 2014, the Atlantic Council launched a campaign to galvanize the transatlantic community into helping ensure that Ukraine survives as an independent nation. Ukraine must have a fair chance to build democracy and shape its own future, including, if it chooses, greater integration with Europe.

an information ghetto by severing telecommunications links between Crimea and mainland Ukraine; silencing dissenting media and expropriating state; and, later, private property.

Russia Reshuffles the Population

Since the first days of the annexation in March 2014, the Russian government has sent Russians to form its military, repressive, and managerial apparatus in Crimea. Sevastopol in particular has seen an influx of military forces, law enforcement officers, and regulatory agency officials and inspectors.¹

These numerous Russian bureaucrats, officers, mercenaries, and soldiers on short-term assignments, along

¹ After annexing the Crimean peninsula, the "Republic of Crimea" and the "City of Federal Importance Sevastopol" were formed. They are considered separate subjects of the Russian Federation and make up the specially created "Crimean Federal District." It is too early to judge the top priority for the settlement of Sevastopol. When soldiers receive housing from the state, they must register their residence there, while bureaucrats can obtain housing in Crimea or retain their housing and registration in the region of Russia where they lived previously.

ACROSS CRIMEA, RUSSIAN CIVILIAN IMMIGRATION HAS ALSO BEEN CONSIDERABLE SINCE THE ANNEXATION, WHILE UKRAINIANS HAVE FLED.

with their families, made up the first large wave of the peninsula's new population. This group constituted the first wave of people initially sent to, in Moscow's historically revisionist lingo, "resettle" Crimea.

As a result, the population of Sevastopol has climbed steadily. On January 1, 2014, the city was home to 384,000 people.² By August 1, 2015, the population had reached nearly 410,000, a 6.8 percent increase.³ By August 2015, over twenty thousand residents of Russia had moved to Crimea in that year alone, the majority settling in Sevastopol, the location of the Russian Black Sea fleet.⁴

Soldiers make up a large part of this new migration to Sevastopol, and along with major infrastructure projects to support this militarization—including a bridge over the Kerch Strait to connect Crimea to Russia, and the installation of electrical wires across Kerch Bay—officials in Crimea have been building homes for troops at a rapid pace.

In August 2015, fifty apartment buildings were completed, making 2,109 new housing units available for the families of those serving in the Russian Black Sea Fleet.⁵ To support the families of the arriving servicemen, the construction of a kindergarten and a school is scheduled to begin, for 260 and 600 children, respectively, by the end of 2015.⁶ Even after these apartments

2 Territorial agency of the Federal Statistics Service for the City of Sevastopol, "Distribution of the Resident Population by Age Group on January 1, 2014," http://sevastopol.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/sevastopol/ru/statistics/population/ (in Russian).

3 Territorial agency of the Federal Statistics Service for the City of Sevastopol, "Population on August 1, 2015," http://sevastopol.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/sevastopol/resources/6475688049c5df799efbdef2e93b570e/экспресс+числ-ть+июль.pdf (in Russian).

4 "Since the beginning of the year, more than 20,000 have moved to Crimea," Sevas News, August 20, 2015, http://news.sevas.com/crimea/rossiyane_perezzhayut_v_krym_statistika_yanvar-iyul_2015.

5 "More than one thousand soldiers have become owners of permanent housing in the Southern military district since the beginning of this year," Interfax-Russia, August 27, 2015, <http://www.interfax-russia.ru/South/report.asp?id=645671> (in Russian).

6 Russian Ministry of Defense, "In Crimea, plans implemented successfully to build housing for the Black Sea fleet," August 13, 2015,

are filled, two thousand more will be needed to house those serving in the fleet.⁷ By 2020, seventeen thousand apartments will be built for the military in Sevastopol in addition to five thousand apartments in other Crimean cities and towns.⁸ Indeed, the expansion of the Black Sea Fleet, together with additional new military units on the peninsula, has produced a massive shortage of housing: the number of servicemen waiting for housing in Crimea exceeds three thousand.⁹

In addition, construction of compounds for new coast guard units in the Simferopol area continues. Six bases for soldiers have already been built, and construction plans for family-style dorms, a kindergarten, and a new school for the soldiers' children have already been approved. Completion is planned for 2016.

Across Crimea, Russian civilian immigration has also been considerable since the annexation, while Ukrainians have fled.¹⁰ In January 2014, the permanent population of Crimea outside of Sevastopol was 1,967,200.¹¹ By October 2014, it had shrunk by nearly 4 percent to 1,891,500.¹²

According to various Ukrainian ministries, around twenty-one thousand residents of Crimea have moved to continental Ukraine.¹³ Crimean experts, including the author of this report, and Crimean Tatar leaders believe that the number of those who have left Crimea is at least twice that number.

But the population decline has swiftly reversed. By June 1, 2015, 1,901,300 people were living in Crimea.¹⁴ In the first half of 2015, 41 percent of migrants came from Russia, amounting to almost 8,500 people, compared with 922 during the same period in 2014. Also in

http://function.mil.ru/news_page/country/more.htm?id=12050100@egNews (in Russian).

7 "Sevastopol military rental housing allowance increases to fifteen thousand rubles," Regnum, August 21, 2015, <http://regnum.ru/news/society/1955347.html> (in Russian).

8 Ibid.

9 Russian Ministry of Defense, "In Crimea, plans implemented successfully to build housing for the Black Sea fleet."

10 Ibid.

11 Territorial agency of the Federal Statistics Service for the City of Sevastopol, "Population on January 1, 2015," http://crimea.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/crimea/ru/census_and_researching/census/crimea_census_2014/ (in Russian).

12 Territorial Agency of the Federal Statistics Service for the Republic of Crimea, "Population Counted During the Population Census of the Republic of Crimea," August 14, 2015, http://crimea.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/crimea/ru/census_and_researching/census/crimea_census_2014/score_2010/ (in Russian).

13 Resident Representative of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, "Operational Information," August 5, 2015, <http://www.ppu.gov.ua/operatyvna-informatsiya-3/> (in Ukrainian).

14 Territorial Agency of the Federal Statistics Service for the Republic of Crimea, "The Demographic Situation in the Republic of Crimea, January-June 2015," http://crimea.gks.ru/wps/wcm/connect/rosstat_ts/crimea/resources/e0c900804982c4bfaf2ef2d12c3261e/%D0%94%D0%A1_0615.pdf (in Russian).

the first half of 2015, 11,396 people left Crimea to live in Russia, compared with 386 people for the same time period in 2014.¹⁵ The Crimean population has continued to grow, despite the fact that there are three to four thousand more deaths than births there annually.¹⁶

Information on real estate sales confirms the process of Crimea's "new resettlement." In August 2015, the State Committee on Registration of Crimea (Goskomregistr) reported that Russian citizens had purchased more than ten thousand apartments, seven thousand land parcels for individual development, and seven thousand homes.¹⁷

Goskomregistr itself serves as a good example of a broader, albeit difficult to track, pattern in which Russian bureaucrats are populating Crimea's government agencies and ministries. Three of its four deputy directors are from Russia: one is from Novorossiysk, another from Moscow, and a third from Krasnodar. Of Goskomregistr's 433 employees, approximately 150 come from Russia, and there are plans to increase their numbers to 250.¹⁸

Curtailing Communications and Media: An Information Ghetto

In ways that mirror Russian President Vladimir Putin's moves early in his rule to bring domestic media to heel, the Kremlin has sought to consolidate its hold on Crimea by muzzling troublesome media outlets. As the Atlantic Council reported in *Human Rights Abuses in Russian-Occupied Crimea*, residents of Crimea have virtually no access to Ukrainian news programs or Ukrainian providers of Internet or mobile phone services. Print and electronic media, including online outlets, must register with the Russian authorities and those deemed disloyal have either been harassed off the peninsula or effectively shut down. Therefore, this year witnessed a comprehensive "mopping up" operation against a few stalwart individuals and organizations.

Two leading Crimean Tatar media outlets, the Crimean news agency (QHA) and the ATR TV station, were ultimately forced to decamp to Kyiv after Russian authorities denied them registration.¹⁹ Prior to this denial, the authorities had searched the offices of ATR and seized materials, while QHA's Editor in Chief had been repeat-

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 "Russians buy more than ten thousand apartments in Crimea this year," Crimea Inform Information Agency, August 20, 2015, <http://www.c-inform.info/news/id/27394> (in Russian).

18 "Goskomregistr Crimea is hiring," *Crimean News*, June 22, 2015, <http://news.allcrimea.net/news/2015/7/22/goskomregistr-krymashet-sotrudnikov-41127/> (in Russian).

19 Amnesty International, "Crimean Tatar Media Will Shut Down as Arbitrary Registration Deadline Expires," March 31, 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/03/crimean-tatar-media-will-shut-down-as-arbitrary-registration-deadline-expires/>.

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edly interrogated. Several other popular Crimean Tatar media outlets, the Lale children's TV channel, and the Meydan and Lider radio stations, were also denied registration and consequently forced to shut down.

Additionally, nearly all residents of Crimea whom the author of this report met, as well as other experts, expressed fear that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) continues to monitor Crimean citizens' social media activities. These fears were confirmed on April 20, 2015, when Emir-Usein Kuku, a representative of the nongovernmental Contact Group for Human Rights, was arrested on his way to work in Yalta.²⁰ Authorities searched his home, seized electronic devices and books, and took Kuku to be interrogated by the FSB, presumably at a law enforcement location in Yalta. Kuku was accused of violating Article 282 of the Legal Code of the Russian Federation, "Incitement of Hatred or Enmity, as Well as Abasement of Human Dignity," citing posts on Kuku's Facebook page from 2013 as the pretext for this harassment.²¹

Marginalizing Critics of the Annexation and "Disloyal" Groups

In 2015, Russian law enforcement took over from the Crimean "self-defense" groups—the Russian-sponsored paramilitary groups constituting the guerrilla forces of the annexation—in pursuing opponents of the occupation. Their tactics include imposing harsh sentences for fabricated incidents in order to make an example of particular individuals.

This has opened the door to arbitrary arrest, search, and legal repercussions against thousands of people for "extremism and terrorism," and "incitement against the territorial integrity of Russia." In "the affair of May 3,

20 "Crimean Tatar Activist Detained in Crimea," Genbank, April 20, 2015, <http://en.krymedia.ru/society/3376723-Crimean-Tatar-Activist-Detained-in-Crimea>.

21 Emir Huseyn Kuku's Facebook posts from 2013, <https://www.facebook.com/emirhuseyn.k/timeline/2013> (in Russian).



Russian soldiers standing at attention during a parade celebrating the anniversary of Moscow's annexation of Crimea.
Photo credit: Sevastopol.gov.ru.

2014,” for example, Crimean Tatars attempted to break through a police cordon at a checkpoint in order to allow one of their leaders, Mustafa Dzhemilev, back on to the peninsula after Russian officials banned him from entering.²² Many who took part in this and related protests faced fines and criminal charges.

Similarly, an FSB investigation concluded that the Karman art center—a unique amateur theater and a center of contemporary culture, art, and education included on official tourism lists of “Things to See in Simferopol”—functioned as a terrorist meeting place. The center’s founder and Director, Galina Dzhikaeva, managed to escape to mainland Ukraine after Russian authorities threatened her with arrest.

The Russian authorities have also prosecuted individuals for actions that took place before Russia annexed Crimea, such as when clashes broke out outside the regional parliament on February 26, 2014, between Crimean Tatars and supporters of Russia’s occupation.²³ In another retroactive prosecution—for an

22 “Rights in Retreat: Abuses in Crimea,” Human Rights Watch, November 17, 2014, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/11/17/rights-retreat/abuses-crimea>; “Crimean Authorities Move Against Tatars and Their Leader,” Euronews, April 22, 2014, <http://www.euronews.com/2014/04/22/crimean-authorities-move-against-tatars-and-their-leader/>.

23 On February 26, 2014, several hours after the occupation of Crimea

alleged offense not committed in Crimea—Maidan activist Aleksandr Kostenko was detained in Simferopol on February 5, 2015 for allegedly throwing a rock at an employee of the Crimean Interior Ministry in Kyiv nearly a year earlier, during the EuroMaidan events. The matter was taken up by Crimea’s new Russian appointed prosecutor, Natalya Poklonskaya, and on May 15, 2015, a court found Kostenko guilty of harming a police officer and possessing parts of a firearm. He was sentenced to four years and two months in prison, reduced on appeal to three years, eleven months.²⁴

Especially noteworthy is the international attention received by the prosecution of film director Oleg Sentsov, or, as it is known in Russia, “the Crimean terrorist incident.”²⁵ Sentsov was recently sentenced by a military

by Russian forces began, several thousand supporters of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis gathered in order to prevent legislators from passing separatist bills. They were opposed by several thousand supporters of the Russkoe Edinstvo (Russian Unity) party. The clashes resulted in the deaths of two people. The Investigative Committee of Russia has opened an investigation.

24 “Court shortens sentence of Maidan protester Kostenko,” Center for Investigative Journalism, August 26, 2015, <http://investigator.org.ua/news/162365/>.

25 On May 11, 2014, Russian law enforcement detained Oleg Sentsov, Gennadiy Afanasyev, Aleksei Chirniy, and Aleksandr Kolchenko in Simferopol and charged them with conspiring to commit terrorism. Special services said they were preparing, “as part of a terrorist organization, to

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tribunal to twenty years in prison for plotting terrorist attacks in Simferopol as part of the Ukrainian nationalist Right Sector group, although both he and the organization have denied that he is a member. The trial of Sentsov and a co-defendant was marred by allegations of police torture, and his conviction has been protested by prominent film directors abroad. A further two defendants were convicted in a separate trial.

It is important to note that all the young people sentenced in the fabricated incident were born, raised, educated, and working in Simferopol, the capital of Crimean autonomy and a city that has traditionally been considered Crimea's most pro-Russian. However, having come of age in a Crimea that was part of an independent Ukraine, they supported the Euromaidan movement in Kyiv and the Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea besieged by Russian forces during the annexation.²⁶

The Russian FSB does not stop its pursuit of dissenters within the borders of Crimea, but also targets citizens of Ukraine who left Crimea as early as spring 2014. Thus, on March 10, 2015, five days after the publication of *Human Rights Abuses in Russian-Occupied Crimea*, the Russian FSB office for Crimea and Sevastopol charged its author, who now lives in Kyiv, with violation of Part 2, Article 280.1 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation, accusing him of public incitement to destroy

detonate explosive devices at the Eternal Flame memorial on May 9, 2014, and at the Lenin monument in Simferopol on April 14 and 18, 2014." The judge sentenced Sentsov to twenty years' imprisonment, Kolchenko to ten years, Afanasyev to seven years, and Chirniy to seven years imprisonment, all at a maximum security prison. Shaun Walker, "Russian court jails Ukrainian film-maker for twenty years over terror offences," *Guardian*, August 25, 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/25/russian-court-jails-ukrainian-filmmaker-oleg-sentsov-for-20-years-over-terror-offences>; Ovcharuk, Bogdan, "'The system does not forgive,'—Crimean activists hauled before a Russian military court," August 10, 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/08/crimean-activists-hauled-before-a-russian-military-court/>.

²⁶ Oleg Sentsov was born in 1976, Aleksandr Kolchenko in 1989, Genadiy Afanasyev in 1990, and Aleksei Chirniy in 1981.

Russia's territorial integrity.²⁷ In April 2015, Russian security agents began searching the home of and interrogating former employees of the www.blackseanews.net website, of which the author is a co-founder and Editor in Chief. At the time of writing this report, the investigation was still underway.

Likewise, Aleksandr Liev, a former Crimean Tourism Minister who fled to Kyiv after the annexation, said he was "repeatedly warned" by individuals from Russia "to talk less about the topic of returning Crimea, as I might face physical repercussions if anyone pulled any shady business. Everyone who brings up this topic is being monitored. For this reason the FSB will severely punish those who 'bark.' I was threatened explicitly and implicitly."²⁸

On August 19, 2015, Putin held a meeting in Sevastopol focused on instilling law, order, and state legitimacy in the Crimean Federal District. He warned publicly that "external forces" were trying to destabilize Crimea:

Some capitals speak openly on this subject, speaking about the need to conduct subversive activities. Structures are being created in parallel, cadres are being recruited and trained to carry out diversions and acts of sabotage, and to conduct radical propaganda. . . . Federal as well as the local authorities must take all these risks into account and respond accordingly. Nothing should be exaggerated here, nor should anything be fomented; but we must keep everything in mind and be prepared to respond accordingly and react quickly."²⁹

Several days later, on August 24, 2015, Ukrainian Independence Day, police in Crimea arrested several people who came individually to lay flowers at the Taras Shevchenko monument in Simferopol honoring the giant of the Ukrainian language and literature, and those who posted photos taken that day with a Ukrainian flag in Kerch. The monument to Shevchenko was erected shortly after Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union and, as one scholar put it in 2005, "remains the only clear symbol of Ukrainianization" in an otherwise

²⁷ On May 9, 2014, Article, 280.1 of the Russian Criminal Code took effect. It forbids "Public provocation to commit acts intended to destroy the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation." Part Two of the article specifically forbids the use of media including information/telecommunications to commit such offenses.

²⁸ "Former head of Crimea Ministry of Resorts: The United States and European Union have done much more than Ukraine to make Crimea a burden for Russia," *Gordon*, August 25, 2015, <http://gordonua.com/news/crimea/Eks-glava-Minkurortov-Kryma-SSHA-i-ES-sdelali-gorazdo-bolshe-chem-Ukraina-dlya-togo-chtoby-Krym-stal-neposilnoy-noshey-dlya-Rossii-95516.html> (in Russian).

²⁹ President of the Russian Federation, "Meeting on issues of law and order in Crimea," August 19, 2015, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/50156> (in Russian).

Russified city.³⁰ One of those arrested received a sentence of fifteen days in jail while others were fined for violating public order. Afterward, police said plainly that they had been arrested for displaying Ukrainian symbols.

Russian authorities have also expelled the Crimean Human Rights Field Mission, the only human rights group working on the peninsula and publishing monthly reports. Its ouster came after it appeared on a list of potentially “undesirable” organizations that was unanimously approved by the Russian Federation Council on June 8, 2015.

With these actions, the Russian government is seeking to scare supporters of Ukraine in Crimea and beyond its borders. The majority of Crimean residents accustomed to freedom of speech find themselves forced to flee to other regions of Ukraine.

Tatars in the Crosshairs

The special attention that Russian authorities give to repressing Crimean Tatars is no accident, according to experts at the Maidan of Foreign Affairs, a think tank with roots in the Euromaidan movement, who cite two primary reasons for Moscow’s anxiety on this score.

First, the Russian government considers the Crimean Tatar community the primary organized opposition group to the Kremlin’s occupation and annexation of Crimea. Second, Russia is concerned that Ukraine’s recognition of the Crimean Tatars as the native people of Crimea and, further, its acknowledgment that Crimea is this ethnic group’s national territory, may complicate Moscow’s assertion of Crimea’s historically Russian roots.

Therefore, in 2015 the Russian government effectively paralyzed the Tatar’s congress, the Qurultay, along with their executive agency, the Mejlis; liquidated independent Crimean Tatar media; created parallel collaborationist structures; sought to marginalize Islamic activity in Crimea; and intimidated the Crimean Tatar ethnic group by repressing its strongest leaders and activists.

On January 29, 2015, the deputy head of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis, Akhtem Chiygoz, was arrested as part of the investigation into the so-called “incident of February 26, 2014.” On that date, thousands of Crimean Tatars gathered outside the then Crimean Parliament to show their support for Ukraine. The demonstrators clashed with pro-Russian forces. For his involvement in organizing the rally, Chiygoz remains in jail.³¹ For the same

30 Karl D. Qualls, “Today’s Travel Through Sevastopol’s Past: Post-Communist Continuity in a ‘Ukrainian’ Cityscape,” The National Council for Eurasian and East European Research, February 23, 2005, https://www.uceis.pitt.edu/nceeer/2005_820_17g_Qualls.pdf.

31 “Akhtem Chiygoz detained till Feb 19, may face 10 years in prison,”

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incident, Ali Asonov, a father of four, has been locked up since April 15, 2015.³² Additionally along with Dzhemilev, Mejlis Chairman Refat Chubarov, former Soviet dissident Sinaver Kadyrov, and the Coordinator General of the QHA information agency and Turkish citizen Ismet Yuksel have all been banned from entering Crimea for five years.³³ Their crime is opposition to Russian rule and annexation.

The work of the Crimea Foundation charity, formerly led by Dzhemilev, has come to a standstill; its property was confiscated in April 2015, including the building in Simferopol where the Mejlis met.³⁴

The Crimean Tatars have called on their Turkish kin for help. In April 2015, an unofficial Turkish monitoring group formed at the behest of the Turkish government visited Crimea to study the human rights situation. Representatives of Crimean authorities strove to circumscribe the experts’ work, monitoring them continuously and preventing their speaking to Crimean residents.³⁵

QHA, January 30, 2015, <http://qha.com.ua/en/events-incidents/akhtem-chiygoz-datained-till-feb-19-may-face-10-years-in-prison/133037/>.

32 Halya Coynash, “The Law and Crimean Tatars held hostage in Russian-Occupied Crimea,” June 24, 2015, <http://khp.org/index.php?id=1434810307>.

33 Refat Chubarov, open letter to the Chancellor of Germany and Presidents of France and Ukraine, Facebook, August 22, 2015, https://www.facebook.com/dogrujol/posts/833379746757181?notif_t=like&ft=qid.6185919291900500971%3Amf_story_key.4173191491116904188%3AeligibleForSeeFirstBumping.

34 “Crimean court decrees seizure of Mejlis building in Simferopol for state use,” Krym Inform Information Agency, April 30, 2015, <http://www.c-inform.info/news/id/22495> (in Russian).

35 “What is in the human rights report that Erdogan handed to Putin?” QHA, June 30, 2015, <http://qha.com.ua/chto-napisano-v-otchete-po-pravam-cheloveka-peredannom-erdoganom-pu-tinu-145970.html> (in Russian).



Naval ships of Russia's Black Sea fleet anchored in the Crimean port of Sevastopol. *Photo credit:* Flot.sevastopol.info.

Among the many human rights violations of Crimean Tatars and others identified by the monitors were infringement of freedom of speech, due process, property rights, coercion to assume Russian citizenship, and restricted access to media and education in their native languages. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan gave the monitors' report to Putin at a meeting in Baku on June 13, 2015.³⁶

Still, Russian law enforcement did not allow six members of the Mejlis to leave Crimea and attend the World Conference of Crimean Tatars in Ankara, which took place from August 1 to August 3, 2015, summoning them on these days for interrogation about the "incident of February 26."

Plundered Property

One need not be a dissenter or activist to fall afoul of the new authorities in Crimea. Simply owning a valuable piece of property has been enough to incur trouble from the Russian authorities.

³⁶ "Report by the Turkish Monitoring Group on the situation in Crimea," QHA, June 5, 2015, <http://qha.com.ua/photo.php?id=26805> (in Russian).

In 2014, the Crimean occupying regime passed an act "nationalizing" at least four hundred properties in Crimea owned by the Ukrainian state, without due process or payment for the property. Exact government figures have not been published because the documents detailing Ukrainian state property in Crimea have been lost since the annexation.³⁷

This year, the "nationalization" of Ukrainian commercial property was launched. Experts at the Maidan of Foreign Affairs generally accept prominent Ukrainian attorney Georgiy Logvinskiy's estimate that about four thousand state, private enterprise, and social enterprise organizations have been seized for use by the Russian regime.³⁸

³⁷ As a result, the July 20, 2015, decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine "On the state of measures realized to protect property rights and Ukrainian state interests in connection with the temporary occupation of part of the territory of Ukraine," was not enacted by the President until August 26, 2015. <http://www.president.gov.ua/documents/5142015-19371> (in Ukrainian).

³⁸ "Ukrainian Ministry of Justice prepares a list of 'nationalized' property in Crimea, so that no investor will touch it," Center for Investigative Journalism, October 24, 2014, <http://investigator.org.ua/news/140008/> (in Russian).

The owners have received no compensation, rather authorities cited the corporations' "strategic significance" or "unauthorized activities" as a pretext for expropriation in 2014.³⁹ In 2015, missing the March 1 deadline to re-register corporations in accordance with Russian legislation, which was imposed after the annexation, was used as a reason to seize properties.

Initially expropriated properties became, for appearances' sake, the property of the Republic of Crimea. However, toward the end of 2014 property stolen from the Ukrainian government and Ukrainian citizens was gradually handed over to the Administrative Department of the President of the Russian Federation. A partial list of such properties includes the Crimean nature reserve in Alushta, the "Swan Islands" nature reserves (*Lebyazhi ostrova*), the historic Yusupov and Golitsyn palaces, four state residences, the Massandra winery along with eight of its branches, several public and private retreat centers, and state children's centers.

EVERYDAY LIFE ON THE PENINSULA HAS BEEN COMPLICATED BY, AMONG OTHER THINGS, INTERRUPTIONS IN COMMUNICATIONS, BANKING, AND CREDIT SERVICES, AS WELL AS LIMITED TRANSPORT OPTIONS TO AND FROM CRIMEA.

All these properties are located in unique nature areas; encompass several tens, hundreds, or thousands of hectares; and would fetch tens or hundreds of millions of dollars on the market. The Russian occupiers' next phase of "appropriating Crimea" will likely be the sale of the expropriated Crimean property.

³⁹ According to Article 235 of the Civil Code of the Russian Federation, nationalization (as a basis for curtailing ownership rights) legally requires making exchanges for property value and other losses as established in Article 306 of the Codex, which, in turn, stipulates that losses suffered by the owner of the nationalized property shall be compensated by the state.

Looking Ahead

It is difficult to be optimistic about the future of Crimea. Russia has become entrenched there, and most Western politicians no longer speak publicly of its return to Ukraine. Further, should diplomats resist the temptation to proffer Crimea to Moscow in exchange for a curb on Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine or Syria, those two conflicts are among the many items on the West's increasingly loaded agenda, pushing Crimea farther into the background.

Everyday life on the peninsula has been complicated by, among other things, interruptions in communications, banking, and credit services, as well as limited transport options to and from Crimea. However, for those who do not hold significant property, do not speak publicly against the annexation, do not attempt to investigate the actions of the authorities, and are not Crimean Tatars, it has not been particularly onerous in terms of human rights violations.⁴⁰ Moscow has raised pensions and public sector wages, for example, and—although Crimeans complain that higher-quality Ukrainian goods are more scarce than their inferior Russian competitors—a number of Ukrainian suppliers have continued to ship goods to Crimean supermarkets.

Those conditions, along with a population reorganized in Russia's favor through immigration and resettlement, could allow the annexation to continue indefinitely.

However, while sanctions cut off the flow of investment from the European Union and the United States, Moscow remains the peninsula's only patron, pouring in as much as \$4.5 billion annually, just as the Russian economy buckles under the weight of isolation and low oil prices.⁴¹ This is the most obvious opportunity for Ukraine and its Western allies to exert leverage on Russia over Crimea.

The Ukrainian government should institute a firm blockade against Ukrainian food shipments to Crimea.⁴² At best, this could tarnish Moscow's image on the peninsula if it fails to respond, and at worst it could give Russia one more fire to put out if it does respond. At the same time, Ukraine must demonstrate that its targets are not ordinary Crimean civilians. This may be achieved by establishing sites near the administrative border where

⁴⁰ Tatiana Kozak, "Everything Is Awesome," *Transitions Online*, March 11, 2015, <http://www.tol.org/client/article/24721-russia-ukraine-crimea.html>.

⁴¹ Larry Hanauer, "Crimean Adventure Will Cost Russia Dearly," *The Moscow Times*, September 7, 2014, <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/opinion/article/crimean-adventure-will-cost-russia-dearly/506550.html>.

⁴² Maidan for Foreign Affairs, "In Addition to Road Closures to Crimea, Businesses Should be Forced to Publicly Renounce Supplies," September 24, 2015, <http://mfaua.org/2015/09/24/krim-perekrittya-dorig-u-krim-slid-zmusiti-biznes-publichno-zrektisyavostavok/?lang=ru> (in Russian).

residents can buy embargoed goods upon presentation of a Ukrainian passport.

Above all, the international community must do two things. Firstly, they must aid groups attempting to monitor the human rights situation in Crimea by helping them to seek legal redress and continuing to pressure Russia in venues such as the parliamentary assemblies of the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Secondly, the international community should refuse to lift sanctions, especially those cutting off long-term financing for Russian banks and key industries. In combination with low oil prices, they could threaten the Kremlin's ability to continue to lavish subsidies on Crimea, or at least to continue to do so without paying a political price as Russia's economy continues to shrink.

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