

Official position of Ukraine

Forced Closure of Crimean Tatar-Language Media Outlets

Freedom of the media is substantially suppressed in the Russia-occupied territories of Crimea and Donbas. According to Ukrainian NGO Institute of Mass Information, more than 300 cases of violation of the freedom of expression, including pressure on media and journalists, took place in Crimea from March 2014 to September 2016. These violations include the shutdown of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar TV channels, and printed media, blocking access to Ukrainian Internet outlets, providing for illegal broadcasting of certain local and Russia-licensed TV and radio companies.

According to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine, Genichesk Police Branch of the National Police Directorate General in Kherson Region conducts pre-trial investigation of hampering lawful professional activities of journalists in the territory of the occupied peninsula by illegally established bodies by:

- creating obstacles and restrictions to the reregistration of ATR media holding outlets (Crimean Tatar TV channel ATR, Crimean Tatar children's channel Lale, FM radio stations Meydan and Leader as well as Internet outlet 15 minutes);
- giving ungrounded refusal to extend the rent of premises of the TV broadcasting company Kerch in January 2015;
- seizing property of the Black Sea Broadcasting Company on 1 April 2014;
- carrying out a search in the building of the Crimean Tatar TV channel ATR, seizing its computer hardware, documentation, funds, and personal belongings of the personnel on 26 February 2015; and
- hampering lawful professional activities of journalist of the Crimean Telegraph newspaper on 13 February 2015.

Relevant criminal proceeding was instituted in accordance with article 171, par 1, of the Criminal Code of Ukraine.

The Government of Ukraine does not exercise control over the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol due to the temporary illegal occupation of these territories by the Russian Federation. In accordance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, the Russian Federation, as aggressor and occupying power, bears full responsibility for the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.