

6 November 2018

Ukraine: Warning received by human rights lawyer Emil Kurbedinov

On 6 November 2018, human rights lawyer **Emil Kurbedinov** received a warning “on prevention of extremist activity” at his office in Simferopol, Crimea. The warning was delivered by a representative of the Prosecutor’s Office of Crimea accompanied by several masked men.

[Emil Kurbedinov](#) is a human rights lawyer in Crimea who is outspoken about human rights violations. Since the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, he has been actively involved in the defence of Crimean Tatars, one of the targeted groups, and supported civil society activists and journalists. He provides legal assistance, observes searches at activists’ homes and brings human rights violations in Crimea to the attention of the public eye through social media and at international conferences. Emil Kurbedinov is the recipient of [2017 Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk](#).

On 6 November 2018, a representative of the Prosecutor’s Office of Crimea delivered a warning to the office of Emil Kurbedinov. Similar warnings were delivered to Kurbedinov’s colleagues, human rights lawyers Edem Samedliaev and Lilia Gemedzhi. On 27 October 2018, during the meeting of “Crimean solidarity”, an initiative created by families members of victims of political persecution in Crimea, another warning arrived. Diliaver Memetov, the coordinator of “Crimean solidarity” also received a warning on the same day. The warning was titled “on prevention of the violation of laws on counteracting terrorism and of legislation on reunions, meetings, demonstrations, rallies and pickets” and read that the Crimean Prosecutor’s Office received information that Crimean Tatar activists linked to the terrorist organisation “Hizb-ut Tahrir” are planning a number of pickets in support of those charged with membership. It is further claimed that the above mentioned lawyers are organisers of these actions.

Taking into consideration that the warning does not have legal consequences and that it was delivered in presence of non-identified masked men, it is believed to be an act of intimidation against Emil Kurbedinov and his colleagues. This is not first time that Emil Kurbedinov faces reprisals for his human rights work.

On 26 January 2017, Emil Kurbedinov was detained by masked representatives of the Centre on Counteracting Extremism in Simferopol and taken for interrogation. His office and home were searched and the entire electronic equipment was seized from the office.

Front Line Defenders is concerned about the intimidation attempt against Emil Kurbedinov and his colleagues as it believes that it is directly linked to their work in defence of human rights.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Russia to:

1. Take measures to ensure that government officials or other public figures refrain from intimidation of human rights lawyers;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Crimea are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.