



Brussels, 17 March 2016

Dear High Representative,

We are writing to you on the eve of a very sad anniversary -- two years of illegal annexation of Crimea, region of Ukraine, by the Russian Federation. As you perfectly are aware of, since then many Crimean Tatars were forced to leave the region and many of those who remained have complained on numerous cases of harassment or even disappearances.

From the very first days of occupation, the functioning of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, the highest executive and representative body of the Crimean Tatars, has been hindered and intimidated in different ways, including through the eventual closure of its headquarters and seizure of some of its properties.

Further on, earlier this year, the Russian Prosecutor of occupied and annexed Crimea, Natalya Polonskaya, appealed to the court demanding to ban the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and to recognize them as extremist. As a result, on 3 March, 2016, the court started in the Kremlin-controlled Supreme Court of Crimea in Simferopol.

We agree fully with opinion of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and other human rights defenders that the decision on the qualification of the Mejlis as an extremist organisation may result in criminal prosecution of the Crimean Tatars, who participate in its work, and also of the supporters of the Mejlis.

We would particularly like to draw your attention to the fact that the EU Delegation is not present during the court rulings. We are hereby calling on you to ensure that the EU diplomatic representatives are urgently sent to Crimea to observe all trial proceedings and to report their findings back to Brussels. We hope you will agree that this court's rulings will have to be followed by adequate reaction from the EU side.

Yours sincerely,

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