

26 January 2017

## **Ukraine: Human rights lawyer Emil Kurbedinov sentenced to ten days' administrative detention**

On 26 January 2017, human rights lawyer **Emil Kurbedinov** was detained by a group of masked representatives from Crimea's Centre for Counteracting Extremism in Simferopol and taken to a local directorate of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) for interrogation. The same day, the Zheleznodorozhny district court of Simferopol found him guilty of "propagandizing for extremist organisations" and sentenced to ten days' detention.

[Emil Kurbedinov](#) is an outspoken human rights lawyer in Crimea. Since the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, he has been actively involved in defence of the Crimean Tatars, who have become one of the major targets for the authorities, as well as civil society activists and journalists. Emil Kurbedinov has been providing people with legal assistance through conducting observations of searches at activists' homes. He has also drawn attention to human rights violations in Crimea using social media, international conferences and reporting before international human rights mechanisms.

On the morning of 26 January 2017, human rights lawyers Emil Kurbedinov and **Edem Semedliaev** were informed that a search had begun at the house of Crimean Tatar activist Seyran Saliev. On the way to Seyran Saliev's home in Bakhchisaray, the car the human rights lawyers were travelling in was stopped by a group of masked people with weapons, who said they were representatives of the Crimea's Centre for Counteracting Extremism. They surrounded the car and stated that Emin Kurbedinov was being administratively detained.

Later the same day, the Zheleznodorozhny district court of Simferopol found Emin Kurbedinov guilty under Article 20.3 of the Code of Administrative Offences of the Russian Federation (propagandizing for extremist organisations) and sentenced to 10 days of administrative detention. The sentence refers to a post Emil Kurbedinov made on the social network Vkontakte that dates back to 6 June 2013 and, according to the court, displayed "symbols of the terrorist organisation "Hizb ut Tahrir". Emil Kurbedinov did not contest the fact that in 2013 he covered the demonstrations of "Hizb ut Tahrir" which took place in Crimea and published related video on his personal page. Under Ukrainian legislation "Hizb ut Tahrir" is not a forbidden organisation, while the Russian Supreme Court designated it as a terrorist organisation in 2003.

Following his arrest, searches took place at the offices of Emil Kurbedinov and Edem Semedliaev and all electronic equipment was seized.

Front Line Defenders is extremely concerned by the arrest and administrative conviction of Emil Kurbedinov and believes them to be directly related to his human rights work and his vocal position in denouncing human rights violations in Crimea.

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

1. Immediately release Emil Kurbedinov from administrative detention and cease all further forms of surveillance and harassment against him.

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.