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Anarchist solidarity to Crimean Tatars

Autonomous Workers Union

May 18th, 2016

Crimean Tatars today are the only politically organized community capable of opposing Russian dictatorship in the Crimean peninsula.

For the past two years the pro-Russian government, established in Crimea by military means, has established feudal-like governance and police state, restricting the people's political rights, suppressing any dissent, and demanding unconditional loyalty from every group of the civil society.

Consequently, the political life in Crimea has been shifting towards a deeply reactionary dictatorship. Independent politics, social and human rights activism, and even basic cultural and entertainment activities have become impossible for Crimean people without the approval of the authorities. Since the first few months of Russian domination in Crimea, a massive stream of refugees to mainland Ukraine has established, composed of those who had been assaulted by pro-Russian collaborators, persecuted by secret services or simply driven away by the new political climate.

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One of the targets for repressions are the indigenous people of Crimea are Crimean Tatars. They have organized a strong community after their repatriation from Central Asia, to which they were forcibly deported by Stalin's regime in 1944. As the new Russian government failed to secure the loyalty of almost 300,000-strong people (which has not regained its rights in the historic homeland) it employed the means of terror. The political leaders of Crimean Tatars, as well as activists and their families, are repressed; the people that blemish the picture of civil uniformity are discriminated against on religious and ethnic grounds.

In the last two years regular police searches, detentions, abductions, tortures, cultural and religious restrictions have become commonplace for the Crimean Tatars. Their national representative institution – the Mejlis of Crimean Tatars did not bow in loyalty before the occupation authorities; for that the organization was officially designated as “extremist” and banned in the entire Russian Federation. Members of the Mejlis in Crimea are falsely accused of many crimes; the accusations ranging from staging mass riots to starting a war on behalf of ISIS. It should be said that every protest organized by the Crimean Tatars is exceptionally non-violent and there haven't been an aggressive statement in their public discourse.

Apparently, the Russian regime is trying to designate Crimean Tatars, the indigenous people who disagree with the occupation of Crimea, a scarecrow, a public enemy. Extremism, terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism and collaboration with Nazis during the German occupation – these are the labels, put on Crimean Tatars in order to imprint racist prejudices upon the loyalist part of the Crimean society and extinguish any sympathy for the oppressed. That is why Crimean Tatars deserve the widest international support more than anyone in the Russian-occupied Crimea.

As anarchists, we do not cherish any false hopes for honesty or decency of the Crimean Tatar's political representatives. We

can hardly believe that members of the Ukrainian Parliament, government officials or President's advisers can truly be honest and accountable spokespeople of their voters' interests, just as it is the case with any other elected official in any other system based on representative democracy. At the same time, we have no moral right to sit on the fence, ignoring the discrimination against Crimean Tatars, or to criticize their political organization in the circumstances of state terror directed against them.

We urge anarchists all over the world to express solidarity and support indigenous people of Crimea, which does not cease to resist the Russian dictatorship despite the restrictions, arrests, violence, and intimidation. We cannot foresee the political fate of Crimea, but in any case Crimean Tatars should be free from discrimination and repressions, their national representation (no matter how far removed from the anarchist ideals they might be) should not be a subject of a government ban.

Down with the dictatorship of Russia! Freedom for indigenous peoples of Crimea! Freedom for the Crimean Tatars!

*Autonomous Workers' Union – Kiev
January 19th anarchist committee*