

Ex-Crimean Tatar Leader Tries to Free Son by Suing Russia at European Court

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The former head of the Crimean Tatar community has filed a complaint against Russia with the European Court of Human Rights, demanding that his son be released from a Crimean jail, according to a statement on the website of Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers.

Mustafa Dzhemilev, who made international headlines in April after he was banned from his native Crimea and all other Russian territory for a five-year period, was set to meet with Arkady Bushchenko of the Justice Ministry's expert council on Wednesday to discuss the complaint.

Dzhemilev's ban created an uproar among the Crimean Tatar community, resulting in a tense standoff between a group of Crimean Tatars and riot police on the border, as well as warnings of the potential for discrimination against the peninsula's Muslim community.

But Dzhemilev's complaint against Russia centers on his son's detention in a Crimean prison, which the elder Dzhemilev has maintained is illegal in light of an earlier ruling by a Ukrainian court.

In May 2013, Khaizer Dzhemilev allegedly shot and killed a man who had been working as a security guard for the family. A criminal case was subsequently launched against him on suspicion of premeditated murder. At a November hearing, he acknowledged his guilt in part and appealed for the lesser charge of manslaughter.

The appeal was still under way when Ukraine was shaken by a power change last spring.

By the time the case became active again, it was in the hands of Crimean prosecutors following Russia's annexation of the peninsula. Thus by this point, the case was being considered under Russian law, rather than Ukrainian.

The case against the younger Dzhemilev was beefed up under the gaze of the new Crimean authorities, who have rejected his manslaughter plea and plan to move forward with the murder charge.

They also plan to pursue the additional charges of unlawful weapons possession and weapon theft. Combined, these two new charges alone carry a maximum sentence of 11 years in prison under the Russian Criminal Code.

Mustafa Dzhemilev has maintained that the additional charges and continued detention of his son constitute harassment by the Crimean authorities.

"The occupiers of Crimea want to have leverage on me and hold my son behind bars in Crimea, but I will not back down. If the occupiers do not free my son, we will get him freed through the European Court of Human Rights," Dzhemilev said at a news conference in Dnipropetrovsk in mid-June, according to the online news portal Comments: Crimea.

See also:

[Leader of Crimean Tatars Labeled 'Extremist,' Banned From Home](https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2014/07/16/ex-crimean-tatar-leader-tries-to-free-son-by-suing-russia-at-european-court-a37382)

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