

Crimean Tatar Activist Sounds Alarm Over Another Disappearance

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Crimean Tatar activists claim yet another member of the ethnic minority community has gone missing, as one of three men reported missing last week was found dead Monday.

The body of Edem Asanov, reported missing on Sept. 29, was found in the resort town of Yevpatoria on Monday, Radio Liberty reported, citing Asanov's sister.

The news followed an announcement made by activist Zair Smedlya on Facebook on Sunday that a 23-year-old Crimean Tatar by the name of Eskender Apselyamov had gone missing on Friday.

"Unfortunately, even during the holidays, they are trying to cast a gloom over us with bad news. God willing, this will end well. We've received notice of the latest disappearance of a Crimean Tatar man," Smedlya wrote.

Echoing other Crimean Tatar leaders, Smedlya has described Apselyamov's alleged disappearance as "an act of intimidation," saying it was "a well-targeted action aimed

at destabilizing the situation" on the peninsula.

Mustafa Dzhemilev, the former leader of the Mejlis, the ethnic community's highest executive body, has warned since being banned from Crimea in the spring that the Tatars would face a wave of discrimination.

Dzhemilev claimed earlier that 18 Crimean Tatars had gone missing since Russia's annexation of the peninsula in March, Newsru.com reported.

Last week, investigators opened a criminal case into the abduction of two Crimean Tatars, identified by activist Abdureshit Dzhepparov as his 19-year-old son and 23-year-old nephew, Islam Dzhepparov and Islam Dzhevdet.

Witnesses reported seeing them abducted on Sept. 27. Their whereabouts are still unknown.

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