

Crimean Tatar Lawmaker Handed 2 Years on Separatism Charges

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Ilmi Umerov (Krim Realii / Youtube)

A Crimean court has sentenced a senior member of the banned Tatar assembly to two years behind bars on charges of separatism, the U.S.-funded Krym.Realii news website [reported](#) Wednesday.

The conviction of Ilmi Umerov, the deputy chairman of the Mejlis, comes a week after another Crimean court [handed](#) a suspended sentence to a Ukrainian journalist on the same charges.

Umerov is the second deputy head of the Mejlis to be convicted in Crimea this month. The Crimean Supreme Court [sentenced](#) Akhtem Chiigoz to eight years for inciting civil unrest.

Before sentencing, Umerov's attorney said he hoped that a new UN report on human rights abuses in Crimea would help lessen his client's sentence, Krym.Realii reports.

The UN [report](#) released Monday documented widespread abuses, including forced disappearances and torture, since March 2014, when Russia claimed the peninsula as its

territory.

Last week, the prosecution requested a 3.6-year suspended sentence for Umerov, the Mediazona news outlet [reported](#).

The Crimean Tatar lawmaker, who was listed as an extremist in December and [indicted](#) on separatism charges the following month, says his conviction is “politically motivated.”

The cases are seen as part of Russia’s crackdown on the Crimean Tatars, a Turkic ethnic group that boycotted the 2014 referendum that Moscow used as a legal rationale for its annexation of Crimea.

Russia [labeled](#) the Mejlis an “extremist organization” and banned it in April 2016.

Umerov has been repeatedly [detained](#) for actively campaigning against Russia’s territorial claims over the peninsula and encouraging more international sanctions.

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