

Crimean Activist Balukh Enters 100th Day of Hunger Strike

June 27, 2018



Krym Realii / Youtube

A Crimean activist who opposed Russia's annexation of the peninsula from Ukraine has entered the 101st day of his hunger strike inside a Russian prison.

A Russian court [sentenced](#) Crimean farmer Volodymyr Balukh to three years and seven months on arms possession charges in 2017, though he alleges he was arrested for flying a Ukrainian flag outside his home. [Recognized](#) as a political prisoner by the human rights group Memorial, Balukh [launched](#) a hunger strike on March 19 to protest new charges [claiming](#) he assaulted a prison guard.

Related article: [Detained Ukrainian Activist Kolchenko Ends Hunger Strike in Russian Jail](#)

Tuesday, June 26, marked the 100th day of Balukh's hunger strike, the Krym.Realii news website [reported](#).

“After several months of starving... Volodymyr is completely exhausted, and his condition is close to critical,” says an online petition [launched](#) in his support.

Balukh [reportedly](#) expressed solidarity with anti-government demonstrations by hanging a Ukrainian flag and leaving it draped outside his Crimean home well after the peninsula was annexed in March 2014.

Memorial [concludes](#) with “a high degree of probability” that he was charged with arms possession for hanging a Ukrainian-language sign honoring the protesters who were killed during Ukraine’s Maidan revolution.

The activist has lost 30 kilograms on a diet of water that for a time included crackers and “kisel,” sweet juice thickened with starch, according to the petition.

The petition, [started](#) by the same campaign seeking the release of Crimean filmmaker Oleg Sentsov – – himself on day 45 of his hunger strike in Russian jail – – calls on supporters to appeal for Balukh’s release with the Russian authorities.

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