UN Slams Human Rights Violations in Crimea

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Kate Gilmore **United States Mission / Flickr (CC BY-ND 2.0)**

The United Nations has decried human rights violations in Russian-held Crimea and conflict-torn eastern Ukraine.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in March 2014, a land grab that Western countries have refused to recognize. The Crimean Tatars, a predominantly Muslim ethnic minority, have largely opposed Moscow's 2014 annexation of the peninsula and has seen its local self-governing body banned as an extremist organization.

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Kate Gilmore, a senior UN human rights official, accused Russia — "the occupying Power" — of "deportations of protected persons, forced conscription and restrictions on freedom of expression" in Crimea.

"We also recorded an increased number of house searches and raids, which have disproportionately affected Crimean Tatars," Gilmore, the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights, said Tuesday.

Gilmore accused Moscow of hindering "unimpeded access" to Crimea and the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk "people's republics" in eastern Ukraine.

Following Tuesday's update at the UN Human Rights Council, the UN monitoring mission in Ukraine on Sunday called on Russia to lift its ban on the Crimean Tatar parliament, called the Mejlis.

More than 13,000 people have been killed since the conflict between pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian government erupted in the region known as the Donbass in 2014.

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