

Ukrainian Civilians Tortured in Russian Jails – Meduza

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A detention facility in Simferopol, Crimea. glava.rk.gov.ru

Ukrainian civilians forcibly deported to Russian jails are regularly beaten and threatened with death, Russia's independent news website [Meduza](#) [reported](#) Friday, citing former inmates.

Prison guards routinely subject Ukrainian detainees to beatings, air gun shootings, electric shocks and threats of execution, Meduza cited several detainees as saying.

“We were turned into hunted animals,” said Alexander Tarasov, who had organized rallies against Russian occupation in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson before his detention in March last year and transfer to Russian jail.

The guards reportedly used similar torture tactics against Mariano García Calatayud, a Spanish volunteer who was among several foreigners swept up in the forced deportations from Ukraine.

Around 100 Ukrainian civilians are currently held in strict secrecy special pre-trial detention

centers across annexed Crimea, Meduza reports.

They are identified as volunteers, journalists, as well as military officers.

Russian security service experts cited by Meduza said the Ukrainian civilians were being held captive to help Russia identify Ukrainian military informants and build up its own intelligence network.

Ukraine's military estimates the number of Ukrainian civilians held across Russia at more than 3,000, scores of whom it claims have died in captivity.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created about 8 million refugees.

Related article: [Putin Authorizes Deportations of Ukrainians From Occupied Areas](#)

Ukrainian prosecutors have documented more than 80,000 accounts of war crimes committed by Russian forces.

Moscow denies any allegations of wrongdoing.

Human rights groups and the UN have regularly reported on the illegal detention and torture of civilians in the years since Russia annexed Crimea and the conflict in eastern Ukraine broke out in 2014.

According to Meduza, Russian authorities are holding most of the Ukrainian detainees captive without pressing charges or qualifying them as prisoners of war, while also preventing them from contacting lawyers.

Several Ukrainian civilians, who rights activists refer to as hostages, have been charged under Russia's terrorism laws.

The Russian Federal Security Service's (FSB) counterintelligence unit oversees detentions in Crimea, while the Russian Defense Ministry's military police covers the rest of the country, according to Meduza.

Russia's Defense Ministry, FSB, the prison service, the Kremlin and Crimean authorities declined to comment, Meduza said.

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