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3. Russia: War's Supersized Repression. URL: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/01/12/russia-wars-supersized-repression>.

**PERSECUTION OF WAR OPPONENTS IN RUSSIA:
HOW HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS SHOULD REACT**

The Russian authorities are persecuting opponents of the war in Ukraine and taking further measures to restrict freedom of assembly and speech, said Nada Al-Nashif, Acting High Commissioner of the United Nations Organization for Human Rights. Another session of the Council opened in Geneva on Monday. Russia was excluded from its membership by a majority vote after the start of a large-scale invasion of Ukraine.

"In the Russian Federation, persecution and restrictive measures and repression against people who express their disagreement with the war in Ukraine undermine constitutionally guaranteed basic freedoms, including the right to freedom of assembly, association and expression of opinion," Al-Nashif said. She also noted that the Russian authorities violate the right to free access to information, put pressure on journalists, introduce censorship and block access to websites.

Russia reacts even more sharply to the participation of the Crimeans in the informational resistance and their expression of disagreement against the war unleashed by the Russian Federation.

So, for example, on May 25, the so-called "Gagarinsky district court" of Sevastopol sentenced a 21-year-old local resident to a suspended sentence for "calling for extremism in social networks." The FSB initiated a case under Part 2 of Art. 280 ("Public appeals to conduct extremist activities") and Part 1 of Art. 148 ("Violation of the right to freedom of conscience and religion") of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

At the beginning of March, the "police" detained a resident of Sevastopol for creating a WhatsApp chat and spreading information about the actions of the occupying army during its aggression against Ukraine, particularly on the mainland. The representative office managed to verify this information.

The agency believes that Russia arrested Crimean human rights defender Abdureshit Dzhepparov for 15 days specifically for an "anti-war" interview with Ukrainian media, and not because of a post on social networks, as officially stated. Shortly before the detention, the human rights defender gave an interview to the LB.ua publication, in which he talked about how the war actually affects the peninsula, in particular, the significant reduction in the number of dead Russian soldiers and the use of the civil infrastructure of the peninsula by the occupiers for military purposes.

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The human rights defender was prosecuted under Part 1 of Article 20.3 of the Code of Administrative Offenses ("Propaganda or public display of Nazi symbols").

The representative office of the President of Ukraine in the ARC is also aware of the distribution of printed materials condemning the war.

From communication with the relatives of one of the citizens of Ukraine who lives in Crimea, the department learned that the 31-year-old resident of Alushta made and distributed such postcards. According to the occupation security forces, the man "scattered them in the mailboxes of apartment buildings, pasted them on the streets of the city, at public transport stops."

Occupation investigators opened a criminal case against the man under Part 1 of Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation ("public dissemination of clearly false information about the use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, the exercise of their powers by state bodies of the Russian Federation"). Currently, he faces up to three years in prison, and the Russians threaten his wife with administrative punishment.

People who have made a choice in favor of leaving Crimea explain this for a number of reasons:
persecution by occupation law enforcement agencies;

a possible extrajudicial massacre due to the build-up of anti-Ukrainian hysteria and public hatred against the Crimean Tatars;

the fear that Ukraine will start a military operation to de-occupy Crimea, which may lead to significant casualties among the civilian population;

the aggravation of the economic crisis in Crimea, the further escalation of sanctions against Russia, which will affect, in particular, the well-being of the peninsula;

the toxic public atmosphere on the peninsula with the spread of hate speech.