

Statement adopted by the Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights

Ukrainian citizens detained as political prisoners by the Russian Federation

Follow-up to Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2231 (2018)

The Committee on Legal Affairs and Human Rights recalls Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 2231 (2018) on Ukrainian citizens detained as political prisoners by the Russian Federation, adopted on the basis of a report prepared for the committee by Emanuelis Zingeris (Lithuania, EPP/CD).

The committee remains deeply concerned at the fact that 70 or more Ukrainian citizens continue to be detained on politically motivated or fabricated charges. It reiterates that until their release, the Russian Federation is obliged to ensure full respect of their rights, in accordance with Resolution 2231 (2018).

The committee therefore repeats the Assembly's call on Russia to release all Ukrainian citizens detained in the Russian Federation or in Crimea on politically motivated or fabricated charges.

The committee is particularly concerned that Oleh Sentsov, Volodymyr Balukh and Pavlo Hyrb, whom the Assembly has determined to be political prisoners within the meaning of Resolution 1900 (2012), remain in detention. It notes that on 5 July 2018, Mr Balukh was sentenced to three years imprisonment by a judge in illegally-annexed Crimea. Mr Sentsov's health deteriorated so much because of his hunger strike that he was threatened with force-feeding by the authorities. As a result of intense psychological pressure, he decided to end his hunger strike, but he is still not receiving appropriate treatment.

The committee repeats the call for Russia to allow the monitoring of the state of health and conditions of detention of Ukrainian citizens detained as political prisoners and for them to be visited by Ukrainian officials, including the Ukrainian Parliamentary Commissioner for Human Rights.

It also repeats the Assembly's call on Russia to abandon the policy of imposition of Russian citizenship on Ukrainian citizens living in Crimea, and in other areas of Ukraine under the effective control of the Russian Federation, who do not wish to acquire it.

The committee notes the lack of progress in relation to Crimea, including the deteriorating situation of the Crimean Tatar people.

Finally, the committee welcomes the fact that since Resolution 2231 (2018) was adopted, at least one prisoner has been released. On 3 August 2018, Oleksandr Kostenko, who had been detained since 15 February 2015 on charges relating to events during the Euromaidan demonstration in Kyiv in late 2013/early 2014, was released.

The committee will continue to monitor the implementation of Resolution 2231 (2018).