

33 persons discredit the Russian army in Crimea every month

The 'Crimean Process' organization has [summarized](#) the two years during which the norm of administrative offence for public actions aimed at discrediting the Russian army was applied in the territory of Crimea. According to the experts, the average number of persecutions was 20 protocols per month in the first month of the war, however, significant rise in the number of persecutions was recorded in the second year, up to 33 persons on average each month.

This is described in the results of yet another regular research of the 'Crimean Process' human rights defending organization regarding the use of article 20.3.3 of the Russian administrative offence code. Crimean courts heard 642 cases (as of now, at least 737 cases) exactly for 2 years. In 98% of them, the court declared the persons guilty of committing the offence, in 10 cases it stopped the persecution because of the expiry date or absence of evidence, and in 2 cases the hearings were postponed to the date outside the time frame of the research.

According to the results of permanent observation, two abnormal Crimean courts were recorded which hear much more cases than other courts – they are: a district court in Simferopol which serves the Counter-extremism center, and Armyansk city court which punishes people after their mobile phones are inspected on entering Crimea from occupied Kherson region. Without the influence of any external factors, the biggest number of persecutions is recorded in Sevastopol (74), Evpatoria (59), Yalta (56).

The analysis of cases in which the article on discrediting the Russian army was applied showed that a significant number of persecutions affects people who publish pro-Ukrainian posts on their social media pages. These cases make 80% of the total number of the delivered court decisions. The second place is taken by oral expression of opinions – 28%. Moreover, human rights defenders record such doubtful forms of 'discrediting' of the Russian army as the phrase 'I wish you a peaceful sky above your head' or hanging out yellow and blue bedsheets. 'In some cases, the presence of discrediting or aiming the statements at the Russian army raise considerable doubt, however, the courts never appointed any linguistic expertise', the authors of the research emphasize.

Also, the researchers noticed that the occupational courts did not publish every third court decision, and information about the time and place of the hearings is published with a significant delay in 70% of the cases, sometimes three weeks after the case was heard by the court. Moreover, the human rights defenders highlight that in processes with such violations more than a half of the judges are either wanted in Ukraine or already accused of high treason. The other 19% of the judges involved in persecutions were transferred to Crimea from Russian regions and administer justice violating the norms of international humanitarian law. In such conditions, independent and objective hearing of cases is not guaranteed in Crimean courts.

In conclusion, the 'Crimean Process' is still convinced that the application of article 20.3.3 of the Russian administrative offence code in the temporarily occupied territory is not aimed at prevention of crime but is preserved exclusively as a tool of oppressing Ukrainian sentiment among residents of Crimea.