

Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

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Four years on from the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the European Union remains firmly committed to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European Union reiterates that it does not recognise and continues to condemn this violation of international law. It remains a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the unity and sovereignty of all States.

The European Union remains committed to fully implementing its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures. The EU calls again on UN Member States to consider similar non-recognition measures in line with the UNGA Resolution 68/262. The European Union does not recognise the holding of elections by the Russian Federation in the Crimean peninsula.

The ongoing militarisation of the peninsula continues to impact the security situation in the Black Sea region. In violation of international humanitarian law, Russian citizenship and conscription in the armed forces of the Russian Federation have been imposed on Crimean residents.

The European Union condemns the construction of the Kerch Bridge without Ukraine's consent and the limitations it has already imposed on the freedom of transit.

Since the illegal annexation by the Russian Federation, the human rights situation in the Crimean peninsula has deteriorated further. Residents of the peninsula face systematic restrictions of fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, religion or belief and association and the right to

peaceful assembly.

The rights of the Crimean Tatars have been gravely violated through the shutting down of Crimean Tatar media outlets, the banning of the activities of the Mejlis, their self-governing body, and the persecution of its leaders and members of their community. Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and all ethnic and religious communities in the peninsula must be ensured the possibility to maintain and develop their culture, traditions, education and identity.

The EU reiterates its call for the immediate release of Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Mykola Semena and all those who have been detained and sentenced in breach of international law. Journalists, human rights defenders and defence lawyers should be able to work independently and without undue interference.

The EU calls for full compliance with international human rights standards in the peninsula. All pending cases of human rights violations and abuses, such as enforced disappearances, torture and killings should be thoroughly investigated. Full, free and unrestricted access for international human rights actors to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol, continues to be paramount. The EU recalls UNGA Resolution 72/190 of 19 December 2017, and calls for its full implementation, including the Russian Federation's obligations under applicable international humanitarian law.

This declaration is issued on the occasion of the 4th anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by the Russian Federation (18 March 2018).

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