

Criminal Case Launched in Ukraine Against Judge Who Banned Crimean Tatar Medzhlis

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Former chairman of the Medzhlis of the Crimean Tatars Mustafa Dzhemilev

The Ukrainian Prosecutor General has initiated a criminal case against the judge who banned the Medzhlis, the Crimean Tatar representative body, the Meduza news agency reported Wednesday.

Judge Natalya Terentyeva will be charged with "violating citizens' equality based on race, national origin or religious beliefs," and "unauthorized assignment of authority," the prosecution wrote in a statement.

"Natalya Terentyeva, in spite of Ukraine's acting legislation, agreed to be appointed as a judge of illegally formed Supreme Court of Crimea. She designated the Crimean Tatar Medzhlis as an "extremist" organization," Meduza reported, citing the document.

The Crimean Tatar Medzhlis was officially labelled an extremist organization and banned

from operation on April 26.

Crimean Prosecutor General Natalya Poklonskaya first ordered the organization's immediate closure in March to “prevent violations of federal law.”

The U.S. State Department has also criticized the decision, urging Russia to lift the ban.

Members of the Medzhlis, including former leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, have been accused of involvement in the ongoing blockade of Crimea by Ukrainian activists and of disrupting power supplies to the peninsula, Russian state television channel NTV reported.

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