

Crimean Citizen Journalism: Genesis and Trends in Communication Network

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Summary

Repressive measures in the Crimea against the Ukrainian media and the ban on the entry of international and Ukrainian monitoring missions created the conditions for the function of providing information to be performed by representatives of civil society. Such a phenomenon was called Crimean citizen journalism and became a post-occupation phenomenon characteristic of the Crimean information sphere. The journalists' activities are aimed at reporting on human rights violations and repression against Ukrainian citizens who find themselves in conditions of information bans and restrictions. Crimean citizen journalism, which connects the peninsula with the mainland of Ukraine, is monothematic in nature, and its emergence has become a form of nonviolent resistance to the occupation of Crimea. The purpose of the study is to cover the characteristic features, the development of common Crimean citizen journalistic movement features as a social phenomenon, a phenomenon that arose after the occupation through the identification of a modern journalist portrait. The study uses the general scientific method of empirical research as the main one, the sociological method of a questionnaire survey, as well as the methods of classification, generalisation, observation, statistical calculation. An analysis of a survey of Crimean citizen journalists demonstrates the existence of an active, mobile

community in Crimea that seeks to provide information and human rights nonviolent resistance to the occupation.

Keywords: *Ukraine, Crimea, Citizen journalism, information, society, social networks, activist.*

1. Introduction

The occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation (RF) in 2014 was recognised as a unique historical event of the late 20th – early 21st century. It was the beginning of the aggression against independent Ukraine and the military occupation of Crimea that emphasised the issue of rethinking the global security system. The conditional status quo established after the Second World War, which is based on the principles of respect for the territorial integrity of states, inviolability of borders and internal affairs, was violated by the occupation of Crimea in 2014. As a result, the world needed a new discussion of the principles of international protection. For Ukraine, the issue of Crimea is not only a problem of returning the temporarily occupied territory, but also a general issue of the right to be an independent state, remain an independent

actor, and defend their own interests in the international political space. The preservation of territorial integrity and the safe return of temporarily occupied territories are recognised as priority areas and strategic tasks of Ukraine. In the seventh year of occupation, Ukraine initiates the creation of a new international format for discussing the problem of the peninsula, called the "Crimean Platform". It is assumed that such an international platform will provide an opportunity to consolidate the issue of Crimea in the «agenda» of the world community in order to find levers for returning the region under the control of Ukraine. The problem of using the possible potential of the "Crimean Platform" is that during the occupation, Ukraine received the highest international legal support for observing its own territorial integrity and inviolability of state borders. Thus, for 7 years, 9 resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly (UN), 5 resolutions of the UN Human Rights Committee, almost 15 resolutions of the European Parliament, 21 resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, 7 resolutions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (PA OSCE) for violation of international law by the Russian Federation in relation to Ukraine, 12 decisions of the Executive Council of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) on monitoring the situation in Crimea, numerous decisions of NATO [4; 19; 14].

The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) considers 4 lawsuits of Ukraine against Russia, one of which is devoted exclusively to the issue of Crimea. Almost four thousand citizens, including residents of Crimea, filed lawsuits in the ECHR regarding the violation of their own rights as a result of the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine in 2014. The lawsuit of Ukraine against the Russian Federation is being considered in the International Court of Justice. Therefore, the success of the Crimean platform lies not in obtaining another declaration or political statement, but in finding concrete solutions and effective mechanisms to force the aggressor state to return Crimea. The task of creating and operating the platform is not just to provide operational information on the current situation on the peninsula, but to propose a concept for the de-occupation of Crimea, based on the capability of Ukraine to lead a global movement to protect the territorial integrity of countries, to respect the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of states, to respect international law [20; 6].

Due to the existing pressure and repressive measures of the aggressor state, namely the ban on the activities of Ukrainian Mass Communication Media on the territory of Crimea, humanitarian expansion into the intellectual environment, and the conduct of propaganda campaigns directed against the Ukrainian state, receiving information directly from residents of Crimea becomes particularly

important. Repressive measures in Crimea against Ukrainian journalists, free authors, bloggers, the ban on the activities of Ukrainian media outlets created the base for the fact that the function of providing information is now being performed by representatives of civil society, who until 2014 were not directly related to the sphere of mass media, did not conduct active information activities in social networks. This phenomenon is called Crimean citizen journalism and is recognised as a post-occupation phenomenon [21;22].

In general, the phenomenon of citizen journalism in the world arose as a consequence of the activation of the civil population in socio-political processes and was the result of scientific and technological progress, the rapid development of the material and technical base in the field of communication. It is considered that citizen journalism «came to Ukraine from the West and became widespread only during the «Orange Revolution» when a huge number of people watched the development of events on the Maidan from their monitors. Usually, the authors of articles are eyewitnesses of events, which gives grounds to assert that public journalism often arises as a consequence of certain circumstances. However, on the other hand, there are also exceptionally active citizens who focus on reporting on certain topics, which usually meets the interests of this person. Under the impression of certain events that a citizen has witnessed, he immediately reacts by reporting them online. This ensures timely submission of information» [3; 15; 13].

The specifics of the work of citizen journalists in Crimea are caused by constant pressure and danger to life and freedom through repression, pressure, restrictions on the creation and use of information content, including criminal and administrative cases, fines, detentions, «preventive» custodial detention for up to 15 days, etc. Despite the appearance on the territory of the peninsula of a sufficient number of bloggers, free authors, who (broadly speaking) «agreed with the occupation» and intensified their activities after 2014, the thematic connection of citizen journalists with Ukraine and Ukrainian consumers is connected with human rights activities. The most famous in this context was the civil information and human rights movement «Crimean Solidarity», which has passed several stages of development [10; 2 18]. The purpose of the paper is to cover the characteristic features of the process of the modern Crimean citizen journalistic movement development as a social phenomenon, the one that arose after the occupation in 2014, through the development of a portrait of a modern journalist.

2. Theoretical overview

Crimean The beginning of Crimean citizen journalists' work was rather unsystematic and unstructured, but in a short time, there were considerable changes: a system of prompt notification was built, the organisation of the production was established, the quality of messages was improved, the latest forms of information work and communication practices were introduced both inside and outside the Crimea, in particular information campaigns, protest acts, flash mobs. Such a form of communication work as photo exhibitions that talk about the fate of political prisoners of the regime is used. The latest photo exhibition, which was collected by a citizen journalist, activist, and a wife of a political prisoner Seyran Saliev – Mumine Salieva, entitled «Being yourself is not Crime!» was opened at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine on March 09, 2021. Over the past year, open meetings of representatives of the Crimean Solidarity movement have been held quite regularly in Crimea, where activists exchange the latest information, thoughts, memories, impressions, and such events draw public attention to the issue of persecutions and repressions in Crimea. An important component in working with the population and especially with the families of political prisoners is a form of social communication – collective prayers (entreating). In the public life of any nation, especially in the absence of freedom, religious events are of great importance, they provide participants with a sense of support, security, and absence of loneliness. To improve the information product, citizen journalists in Crimea are searching for the latest forms of communication and emotional impact on the audience. The work of representatives of the public movement «Crimean Solidarity» is not limited to social networks. Recently a special website of the movement [5] has been launched, which promptly reports on events. The «News» section contains subsections «Persecution», «Initiatives», «Families of political prisoners», open headings «Political prisoners», «Cases», «Lawyers», «Crimean childhood», «Thoughts» [7], which draw attention to the fate of political prisoners, provide legal advice and comments, and express support for their family members and loved ones.

There are speeches of political prisoners in court «The last word», printed appeals of political prisoners to the public «Letters from captivity», provided information about the conditions of stay in captivity, distributed diaries, even literary works, an example of which is an excerpt from a poem created in February 2021, in the Crimean Tatar language of the political activist, public figure Server Mustafayev, who is now in prison:

Кене кельди агъыр хабар
Бизим апис ханемизге,
Зулюм, баскъы девам эте,
Раат яшайыш екъ бизге.

Яш-къарткъа бакъмайып,
Эвлеримизде тентюв этип,
Ишгъальджи ишсиз отурмай,
Апис ханелерини бош тутмай.

Буны корип, бильсинъ халкъым –
Бойсундырмакъ истей залим!
Догъру елну сечсе халкъым,
Саиб оламаз буна залим!

Translation:

The bad news came again
To our prison,
Grief and pressure continue,
We do not have a free life.

Not considering old and young,
Searching our homes,
The invaders do not stay out of work,
They keep their prisons full.

Let the people who see everything know, –
The criminal wants to humiliate us!
And if my people choose the right path,
The criminal will not succeed!

Emotional and very influential are the printed works of the mother of long-term convicted political prisoners held in captivity on the territory of the Russian Federation Uzeyir and Teymur Abdullayev – Dilara Abdullayeva, who shares her thoughts and impressions on Facebook (2021). Dilyara's sons not only received terrible sentences for 17 and 15 years, her son, Teymur Abdulayev, has been in a special punishment cell for almost whole last year – Punishment Isolation Cell. Over time, Dilyara Abdullayeva's publications turned into small essays that reflect the pain of a soul: «How I want to run into the spring», «Only clouds in my soul», «Ural», «A dream about Teymur» «Pain. Despair. Guilt», «Geometry of life», «Cry, heart, cry», and others. One of them, titled «I am proud to be your son, Mom,» written in 2019, can be considered an example of civic prose (*translated into English*): «Stop the Earth, I will come down! I cannot do this anymore, I do not have the strength anymore. My brain does not want to accept everything that happens to my sons. Stop the Earth, please, I need to save them! The feeling of an urgent need to share my thoughts with you at the moment drives me, my dear reader! I want to tell you everything, but my thoughts are rushing faster than I can write. My thoughts are racing as if they were not allowed to break free, all at once. I will start with the most important thing that has been bothering and chilling my soul for three days now. You will say it is hot outside, yes, but I am cold, very cold and uncomfortable. Instinctively, I want to hide and warm up somewhere. Stop time and turn

it back. These meaningless, impossible reflections suddenly made great sense to me. My memory takes out all the memories that have become so precious to me. This is the whole life before the arrest of my sons, my innocent sons, the best sons in the world!

On Friday, June 5, there was an official call from my youngest son Teymur, and we talked for the entire time allotted to call home. He said that the lawyer visited, asked if I had received flowers from him and his brother, but he has no information, Teymur is isolated not only from society, but also from communicating with prisoners.

Being in a punishment isolation cell in an individual cell, under 24-hour video surveillance, a person is restricted in their rights. Solitary confinement is a complete social isolation of a person, which is equal to the conditions of torture! This is a round-the-clock darkness, a cramped damp concrete room with drops of water on the walls from high humidity, with a built-in table. A punishment isolation cell is the most severe punishment for those who serve a sentence in a penal colony. Currently, my two sons Uzeyir and Teymur are in a punishment isolation cell in different colonies... Every time I share this with you, my dear reader, in my heart I turn to you for help. It is not true that you cannot do anything, you do a lot, we, you – the public, and your opinion is important, it is worth a lot. Freedom for political prisoners! Their freedom is our freedom!» [7].

In another post, dated March 19, 2019, Dilyara Abdullayeva draws attention to the trial: «On that cold, snowy February day, another trial of our innocent sons was taking place here in Rostov in a military court. We, about twenty people, were allowed into the hall as listeners. All our sons were in the aquarium cage, except for my youngest son Teymur. And suddenly, behind us, the door opens noisily, and from there they pull the half-bent Teymur, cruelly and roughly by the shackles in which his hands are chained behind his back. I saw the humiliation and bullying my son Teymur is experiencing, I saw it with my own eyes. My Uzeyir and all of our honourable sons go through this. Our honourable sons are humiliated daily by the cowardly enemies of my people. Strong, brave, in shackles, forced to obey the rules, be insulted, be victims of physical and psychological violence, torture, be in punishment cells, solitary cells without windows, or overcrowded cells, where there is nothing to breathe, aquariums, and cages. And at the same time, our own sons remain Persons with a capital letter. To remain a kind, friendly person with a sense of humour and still try to support us, mothers, wives, children in such conditions – only an honourable person can do this. People like them only need to be persuaded, not intimidated!» [7].

3. Materials and method

The study of the Crimean citizen journalistic movement as a socio-political phenomenon, the activities of Crimean journalists, human rights defenders, activists under occupation and constant external control, becomes relevant in the search for ways to end the occupation, and remains a new and understudied area. There are a number of certain restrictions and objective difficulties for working in Crimea, such as a ban on entry, free access of Ukrainian scientists for «field» research, and a danger to the freedom of researchers and participants of the scientific process. The main method of empirical research is a sociological questionnaire survey, methods of classification, generalisation, observation, and statistical calculation are used.

In the current conditions, the study of the citizen journalistic movement was conducted through an electronic questionnaire survey. The questionnaire was distributed to both residents of Crimea and representatives of the movement who were forced to leave Crimea as a result of the repression and now live on the mainland of Ukraine. For security reasons, the survey was conducted anonymously, the respondent could not specify their name. The questionnaire consists of 20 closed and open questions, which together made up three thematic blocks. In the first part, devoted to personal information and self-identification of citizen journalists, questions are presented:

- What region of Crimea do You live in?
- What is Your age?
- Your gender?
- How do You position yourself in your activity?
- What pressure do You feel from the de facto Crimean authorities in your own civic activities?

What events/actions in Crimea do You actively participate in?

In the second part «Professional skills and the problem of creating a high-quality information product, improving your own skills and knowledge», the following questions were asked:

- What professional skills necessary to work as a citizen journalist do You have?
- Do You feel the need to improve your professional skills in the process of disseminating information?
- How exactly would You like to improve your knowledge and professional skills?

The third and largest part of the survey, «communication and cooperation with Ukrainian society (state bodies, civil organisations, mass media)» is related to the coverage of the problem of organisational and communication relations with actors of the Ukrainian state:

- What kind of support from the Ukrainian authorities in protecting Ukrainian citizens (political prisoners, activists) in Crimea can You name?
- What else do You think the Ukrainian authorities can do to help Ukrainian citizens in Crimea?
- What kind of work on the part of civil society institutions (human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations, etc.) in supporting Ukrainian citizens in Crimea can You mention?
- What else can civil society institutions (human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations, etc.) of Ukraine do to help Ukrainian citizens in Crimea?
- Does coverage, dissemination, and popularisation of information about the Crimean events in the media and social networks of Ukraine and the world help your work?
- If coverage, dissemination, and popularisation of information about the Crimean events in the media and social networks of Ukraine and the world helps you, then how exactly?
- What other activities do the Ukrainian media need to carry out to cover the events in Crimea?
- What media outlets in Ukraine can You highlight in the «Crimean issue»?
- What actions in Ukraine do You consider most effective in supporting political prisoners and activists in Crimea?
- What actions from the international community do You consider most effective for supporting political prisoners and activists in Crimea?

The questionnaire was compiled in Ukrainian, and the answers were provided in Ukrainian and Russian. The questionnaires among Crimean citizen journalists were distributed privately; after the survey, 29 completed questionnaires were received, in which 27 people (93.1%) wished to remain incognito, and two journalists (6.9%) – Dilyaver Memetov and Seitumer Seitumerov – provided answers, openly indicating their names.

3.Results and Discussion

3.1. Self-identification of crimean citizen journalists

The first part of the survey was devoted to an attempt to collect personal data and identify Crimean citizen journalists who are now related to public civil activities, to collect information about the conditions and specifics of their work. From the answers to the question «What region of Crimea do you live in?» it became known that representatives of the citizen journalistic movement live in different parts of the peninsula (Figure 1). Thus, almost half of journalists live in the central part of Crimea, in particular in the cities of Simferopol and Bakhchisarai (14 answers, 48.27%), the southern part of Crimea is represented (6 answers, 20.69%), among the respondents –

residents of the city of Old Crimea, located in the east of Crimea (3 answers, 10.34%). An interesting fact remains that despite the location of searches and arrests in the regions of Crimea, citizen journalists quickly respond to coverage of events. Streams on FACEBOOK (2021) are conducted from a single account «Crimean Solidarity», which indicates the presence of a clear organisation and rapid exchange of information, as was, for example, during recent searches, during the detention on January 12, 2021 of almost 100 representatives of the civil community on the Crimean bridge, when they were travelling in support of their compatriots for the verdict in the Rostov-on-Don District Military Court.

1. In which region of Crimea do You live?
24 answers

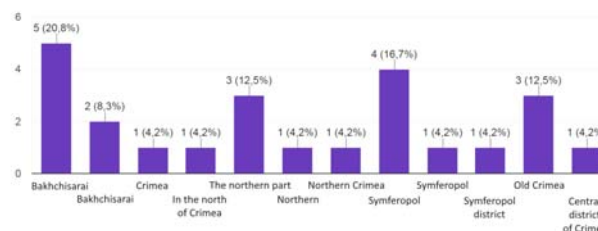


Fig. 1. Regions of residence of citizen journalists in Crimea

From the answers to the second question of the questionnaire «What is Your age?» it becomes known that the Crimean citizen journalist is a person of a predominantly young age, a figure who is characterised by speed, efficiency, mobility (Figure 2). Elderly people and children, as a rule, do not participate in citizen journalistic activities, although practice shows that they are quite active in other projects and initiatives implemented in Crimea by relatives and friends of political prisoners (the project «Crimean Childhood», the initiatives «Our children are not terrorists»), initiatives for the release of illegally convicted Crimean Tatars, etc. The vast majority of respondents are from 18 to 35 years old (24 answers, 82.75%), the other age group – from 36 to 45 years (4 answers, 13.8%). Only 1 representative under the age of 18 was involved in the movement, which is 3.44%.

2. What is Your age?
29 answers

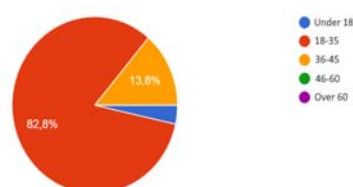


Fig. 2. Age distribution (representation) among citizen journalists

An important component of the movement is gender equality among journalists involved (Figure 3). The conditional division of work consists of men mainly covering searches and detentions, which usually happen in the morning, in court sessions. Field work requires stability, instant response, mobility, and a certain activity on the scene, as well as basic knowledge and skills in creating informational content. There are numerous examples of pressure on citizen journalists who participate in online work: they are fined, equipment is seized, administrative penalties are issued, and they are placed in custody for 10-15 days. Women are more involved in organisational issues related to information support for the families of political prisoners, open meetings, social actions to protect the relatives and friends of victims, prayers (entreating), charity events. Thus, of the respondents, men make up 69% (20 answers), women – 31% (9 answers).

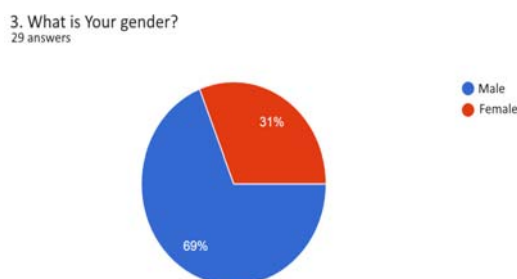


Fig. 3. Gender distribution of Crimean citizen journalists

In the issue of self-identification of the Crimean citizen journalist, the issue of their own positioning and understanding of their place in the civil movement plays an important role.

Taking into account universalism as the main feature of this movement, namely the need to participate in various types of social work, communication work, and activism within the limits that are possible under occupation, understanding how a journalist identifies himself takes on a separate importance. The fourth question «How do You position yourself?» was built in such a way that a person could choose only one answer option, and in case of disagreement with the proposed options, provide their own answer (Figure 4). The largest number of respondents feel like activists – 41.4% (12 people), citizen journalists – 24.1% (7 people). The following fact draws attention: 10 (20.7%) respondents position themselves as journalists who associate their activities with communication with the media of Ukraine or the media of the Russian Federation, who specialise in human rights violations [8]. Journalists can also include people who are currently on the mainland of Ukraine and were forced to leave Crimea. 3 people (10.3%) are focused on purely human rights activities, 1

respondent (3.44%) called himself a universal figure (human rights activist, journalist, activist).

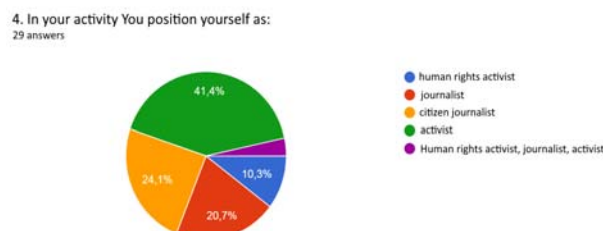


Fig. 4. Self-identification of Crimean citizen journalists

At the same time, all journalists, without exception, experience various forms of constant pressure from the so-called «official» authorities of Crimea (Figure 5). Among them, criminal and administrative cases predominate, which were reported by 13 journalists (54.2%), official warnings and so-called preventive conversations were held against 11 people (45.8%). Fines were received by 6 figures (25 %), threats and blackmail were used against two journalists (8.3%). One (4.2 %) of the respondents reported self-surveillance. The general atmosphere of fear and pressure hinders work according to 1 journalist (4.2%). 5 (17.24%) respondents did not answer the question.

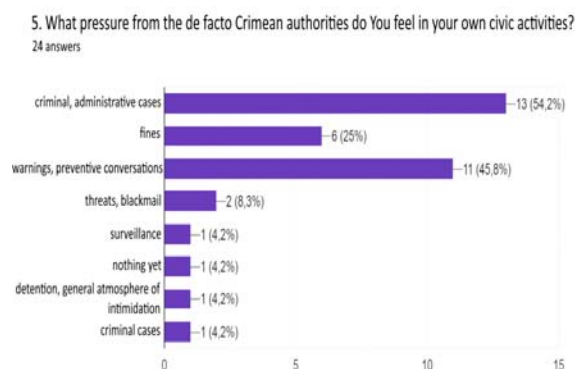


Fig. 5. Forms of pressure on Crimean citizen journalists

Residents of Crimea who participate in journalistic activities take an active life position, which indicates their unwillingness to accept the current state of affairs (Figure 6). The majority – 25 people (86.2%) – cover the court sessions attended, the same number – 25 people (86.2%) – work on creating informational content (text messages, photos, videos), three-quarters – 22 journalists (75.9%) – participated in informational coverage of arrests, searches, and online streams. Almost half of the survey participants – 16 journalists (55.2 %) – took part in public resistance actions (protests, public gatherings, information flashmobs).

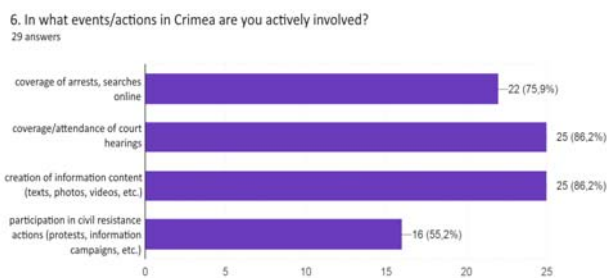


Figure 6. Information activities of Crimean citizen journalists

3.2. Professional skills and improvement of their own skills and knowledge

The second block of the questionnaire was aimed at establishing the professional qualities and properties of citizen journalists operating under temporary occupation. The lack of open access from Crimea to the system of improving professional qualities and skills, the need to study directly in the process of work, the semi-underground connection of Crimea with Ukrainian society – these are the conditions in which journalists work on the peninsula. The survey showed that the vast majority of respondents have at least one of the skills that they use in the process of performing their duties (Figure 7). Thus, 17 journalists (60.7%) said that they create an information product for social networks, 15 journalists (53.6%) take photos, and 12 people (42.9%) take videos. 8 people (28.6% of respondents) mastered the general principles of creating journalistic texts. More complex work that requires special skills, namely creating films, clips, video materials, is performed by 3 journalists (10.7%). A small number of respondents, including 3 people (10.7%), said that they perform all types of work, and 2 people (7.1%) feel like universal figures who are able to perform all types of work, except for creating websites. 1 person (3.6%) works in Photoshop and other special editing and visual design programmes. 1 journalist (3.6%) did not respond.

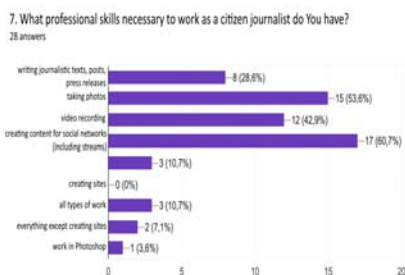


Fig.7. Types of work of Crimean citizen journalists

All Crimean citizen journalists, without exception, feel the need to improve their professional skills. This question was answered positively by 29 respondents (100%), which indicates the need to involve them in the practice of professional growth, to create conditions for constant communication (Figure 8).

8. Do you feel the need to improve your professional skills in the process of disseminating information?
28 answers

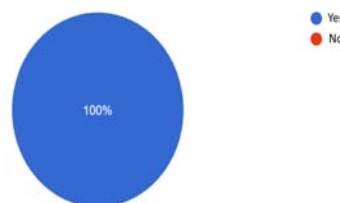


Fig. 8. The need to improve the professional skills of journalists

According to Crimean citizen journalists, it is necessary to improve their own skills through trainings, seminars, master classes, and cooperation with professional journalists (9 respondents, 27.6%). A wish was expressed to improve skills through video shooting and editing lessons (2 respondents, 6.9%). Several respondents said that they have no idea about possible ways to improve their skills, but are interested in getting the final result (3 people, 10.3%). The work on improving the qualities and professional development of Crimean journalists should be closed, as it is related to security and freedom for Crimean residents.

Cooperation with ukrainian society (government agencies, civil society, mass media)

The third, largest, and most detailed component of the survey is devoted to the work and prospects of future work with Ukrainian institutions, of which three categories are distinguished: state authorities, civil society institutions (public human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations), Ukrainian and international media. To the question «What kind of support from the Ukrainian authorities can Crimean citizen journalists determine?», almost half of the respondents did not answer (13 people, 44.82%). Among the possible responses received are: information support, initiatives (5 people, 17.24%), support for political prisoners (3 people, 10.34%), exchange of political prisoners (3 people, 10.34%), statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, consular assistance to political prisoners (3 people, 10.34%). At the same time, 2 respondents (6.89%) noted that «support is very weak now», and 2 respondents also said that there is a «lack of initiative and interest» (6.89%)

To the following question, which was related to the previous one, namely: «What else, in your opinion, can the Ukrainian authorities do to help Ukrainian citizens in Crimea?», 21 respondents (72.41%) out of 29 answered, which to a certain extent indicates the high expectations of Crimean residents for help and attention from the authorities and society of Ukraine. Each of the respondents offered their own answer options, the main ones being the following:

- the development of practical methods for the release of political prisoners and exchange (9 responses, 31.03%);
- an increase in information work on Crimea, dissemination of information about events in Crimea (7 responses, 24.13%);
- organisation of legal protection, assistance to political prisoners and their families (4 responses, 13.79%);
- negotiations with foreign colleagues to impose sanctions against the aggressor country and pressure on the Russian Federation (3 responses, 10.34%);
- adoption of the programme, Strategy for de-occupation of Crimea (1 response, 3.44%);
- appeal to European courts (1 response, 3.44%)

An identical picture can be traced in the responses of Crimean journalists regarding contacts and joint work with public organisations of Ukraine. Thus, to the question «What kind of work on the part of civil society institutions (human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations, etc.) in supporting Ukrainian citizens in Crimea can you mention?», 16 respondents (55.17%) out of 29 answered, and two (6.89%) of them answered that they have no idea about such work. In particular, the following activities were mentioned:

- general support from activists, in particular public organisations «Zmina», «Crimea-SOS», «Media Initiative», «Crimean Tatar Resource Centre» (3 responses, 10.34%);
- flash mobs, public gatherings, protest acts, including single ones, initiatives (3 responses, 10.34%);
- participation in international conferences, attracting the attention of international society (2 responses, 6.89%);
- financial support, legal assistance (2 responses, 6.89%);
- dissemination of information about events in Crimea (1 response, 3.44%).

To the next question «What else can civil society institutions (human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations, etc.) of Ukraine do to help Ukrainian citizens in Crimea?», 19 responses (65.51%) out of 29 possible ones were received. Among them were the following:

- media coverage, public opinion development (7 responses, 24.14%);

- organisation of information acts, campaigns, protests, public gatherings, flash mobs, etc. (3 responses, 10.34%);

- increasing assistance to people living in Crimea, providing legal assistance and support to political prisoners and their families, raising funds for the families of political prisoners (2 responses, 6.89%).

The answer options also suggested general things: «new forms of coverage and work in Crimea should be considered», «to increase work in the above areas», «return Crimea», «not to stop!», «not to forget about Crimean Tatars and political prisoners» (5 responses, 17.24%).

The next four questions were related to the problem of cooperation between Crimean figures and the Ukrainian media. The most important is the fact that coverage, dissemination, and popularisation of information about the Crimean events in the media and social networks of Ukraine helps the activities of journalists in Crimea, provides support, and creates a certain public «immunity» for victims of repression (Figure 9). All 29 people (100%) gave a positive answer to the question, which indicates the importance of information communication between Ukraine and Crimea and refutes the opinion that information coverage of events on the peninsula hinders or threatens the lives and activities of citizen journalists.

Does the coverage, dissemination, popularisation of information about Crimean events in the media and social networks of Ukraine and the world help your activity?
28 answers



Fig. 9. The importance of information communication with the occupied Crimea

Answers to the following question «If coverage, dissemination, and popularisation of information about the Crimean events in the media and social networks of Ukraine and the world help You, then how exactly?» specify information communication and present the opinion of citizen journalists on the importance of informational coverage of the current state of events in Crimea. The distribution of opinions on the need for information communication from 22 respondents (75.86%) is as follows:

- forms global and Ukrainian support, the world receives real information about Crimea and can continue to apply it for political decisions, keeps the issue of Crimea on the agenda, draws attention to the problem of political prisoners of organisations engaged in the protection of human rights (7 responses, 24.14%);

- forms public opinion in Crimea, in particular that there are no terrorists or extremists in Crimea, demonstrates objective reality (6 responses, 20.69%);
- gives certain confidence, a sense of support, becomes the «voice of political prisoners», makes their stories lively and relevant, helps to draw attention to the problem (6 answers, 20.69%);
- it helps with the fact that Russia cannot apply the stricter repressive mechanisms which it uses in its own territories, publicity is a deterrent for the enforcers, so it is important to cover repressions, talk about prisoners (2 answers, 6.89%).

Analysis of the response about expectations in Crimea from media activities shows that there is only one proposal – to increase the volume of materials about Crimea. Thus, citizen journalists (20 responses, 68.7%) suggest increasing the amount of information about Crimea: more different initiatives in which the topics of children and families of political prisoners would be raised, make news on various sites, use different resources, increase the amount of information, conduct programmes on all Ukrainian TV channels, cover Crimean events more often, not to let people forget about Crimea, cover the problem of political prisoners, persecution, and repression on a national basis more often, prepare more material about everyone who was under repression.

Among the media that most actively inform the audience about the events in Crimea and constantly pay attention to this issue are national Ukrainian television channels, online publications, niche Crimean media, and Russian media. Respondents (a total of 22 people, 75.86%) indicated the following media: national TV – Channel 5, channel 112, 1+1, STB, Suspilne, Hromadske, UA TV, TV «Ukraine», Ukrainian online publications – «Ukrainska Pravda», «Radio Svoboda», «Graty», «Krym.Realii», Crimean TV channels – ATR, publishers in Crimea – «Avdet», Hromadske Radio, Russian online publication – [8].

The answers to the last two questions of the questionnaire are almost identical, and they offer options for the most effective actions in Ukraine and the world to support political prisoners and activists in Crimea (figures 10, 11). The respondents' responses (28 responses, 96.55%) drew attention to the following types of activities:

- media coverage of the current situation, distribution of content in social networks (75% – in Ukraine, 75% – for the international community);
- collecting funds for relatives and friends, providing legal advice (60.7% – in Ukraine, 41.7% – for the international community);
- social initiatives (including charitable ones) (46.4% – in Ukraine, 41.7% – for the international community);

- information campaigns (including thematic events etc.) (50% – in Ukraine, 37.5% – for the international community);
- all these options (7.1% – in Ukraine, 8.3% – for the international community).

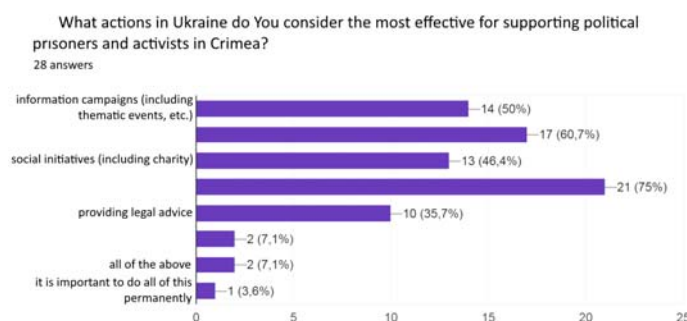


Fig. 10. Organisation of work in Ukraine for supporting Crimean political prisoners and activists

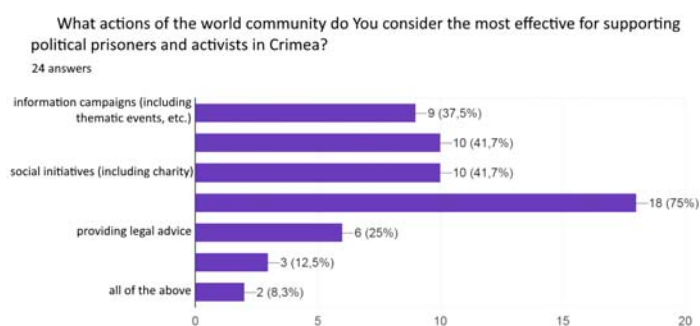


Fig. 11. International work in protecting the rights of Crimean political prisoners and activists

Representatives of the citizen journalistic movement live in different parts of Crimea. A characteristic feature of journalists' work is mobility, efficiency, the ability to urgently respond to pressure (searches, arrests, detentions), and spread information about events. The social movement involves both women and men, the distribution of the functional load in whose activities is rather conditional: men participate in covering protests, resistance actions, court sessions, and women are involved in the human rights and information sphere, carry out social work for supporting the families of political prisoners. The representatives of the Crimean citizen journalism movement are mostly young people from 18 to 35 years old, elderly people participate in resistance actions, flash mobs, and protest acts. The survey has shown that almost all citizen journalists note their own skills in using technology and creating mass information, such as writing texts, creating photos and videos, online streams in social networks, and even working on designing websites and

using special programmes. Without exception, all citizen journalists feel the need to improve their professional skills and abilities, they are open to learning, and they are ready to improve their own qualities in creating a media product. According to the survey results, almost all representatives of the citizen public journalistic movement seek for improvement coworking with Ukrainian journalists and attending special seminars, trainings, master-classes, and performing practical tasks [17].

The third and largest block of questions was related to the important problem of protecting and supporting Ukrainian citizens under temporary occupation. Citizen journalists are in constant contact with representatives of the authorities, civil society, and the media in mainland Ukraine. Such organisational and communicative relationship is of great importance, as it provides support, forms immunity, and even deters the so-called «human rights» bodies of the peninsula against the implementation of the most serious crimes against Ukrainian citizens in Crimea. The results of the survey completely refute the opinion that it is necessary to keep silent about the events in Crimea because in this way they allegedly cause danger to residents of the region. The importance of organisational and communicative relationships with the Ukrainian authorities, public organisations and mass media, public dissemination of information was mentioned by all citizen journalists of Crimea. In the work of the Ukrainian authorities, journalists identified information support, initiatives, exchange of political prisoners, the activities of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ukrainian consular assistance in the Russian Federation as important. At the same time, four respondents noted that «currently, the support is very weak», and there is also a «lack of initiative and interest». In Crimea, people are very much hoping on the activity of Ukrainian authorities, among the possible areas is the entire complex of works: practical methods of release and exchange of political prisoners, increasing information work, spreading information about events in Crimea, legal protection, assistance to political prisoners and their families, negotiations with foreign colleagues to impose sanctions against the aggressor country and pressure on the Russian Federation, the adoption of a programme for the de-occupation of Crimea, appeals to European courts [9].

An identical picture is observed in the responses of Crimean citizen journalists regarding contacts and joint work with public, volunteer, and charitable organisations in Ukraine. To the question «What kind of work on the part of civil society institutions (human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations) in supporting Ukrainian citizens in Crimea can You mention?», general support from activists, information flash mobs, public gatherings, initiatives, including single initiatives, participation in international conferences, drawing the attention of international society to the

problem of Crimea, financial support, assistance in legal work, dissemination of information about events in Crimea were outlined. To the next question «What else can civil society institutions (human rights organisations, volunteers, charitable organisations, etc.) of Ukraine do to help Ukrainian citizens in Crimea?» it was noted: more intensive media coverage, forming public opinion, organising information initiatives, campaigns, protests, public gatherings, flash mobs, helping people living in Crimea, providing legal assistance and support to political prisoners and their families, raising funds for the families of political prisoners [1].

The answers to the next section specify information communication and present the opinion of citizen journalists on the importance of informational coverage of events in Crimea in the Ukrainian media. 22 respondents (75.86%) believe that such work: forms global and Ukrainian support, provides real information about Crimea, and in the future can be used for political decisions, keeps the issue of Crimea on the agenda, draws attention to the problem of political prisoners of organisations engaged in the protection of human rights, forms public opinion in Crimea, in particular that there are no terrorists and extremists in Crimea. An important component of this process is that, as noted in the responses, support from Ukraine «creates confidence in the Crimean community, a sense of support, becomes the «voice of political prisoners», makes their stories lively and relevant, helps to draw attention to the problem, helps by the fact that Russia cannot apply the stricter repressive mechanisms that it uses on its territory». The nature of citizen journalism, which emerged after 2014 in Crimea and connects the peninsula with the Ukrainian state, is purely of human rights character [10]. The activities of journalists are aimed at reporting human rights violations and repressions against Ukrainian citizens who find themselves under temporary occupation, information bans, and restrictions. Citizen journalism in Crimea is generally monothematic and is devoted to events in the legal and socio-humanitarian spheres. Human rights violations and restrictions on freedom of speech have prompted activists to use various methods of communication and information influence, and the emergence of citizen journalism as a socio-political phenomenon has become a form of nonviolent resistance to the occupation of Crimea and restrictions on freedom of speech, will expression, and conscience [11].

4. Conclusions

As a conclusion, it should be noted that success in the process of achieving the ultimate goal of de-occupation of Crimea is closely connected not only with international work, but also Ukrainian internal work, the basis of which is to establish close ties with Ukrainian citizens in the

occupied territory, to protect their rights. For the first time in the history of independence, Ukraine has faced problems of occupation, war, and aggression, and is trying to find ways of solving them. Much has been done in 7 years: from bringing the Ukrainian regulatory framework for the protection of citizens on the occupied territories to appropriate shape to creating conditions for citizens to use all constitutional rights: education, health care, the right to justice, freedom of speech, expression of will, etc. As a state that has chosen the diplomatic path of returning Crimea, Ukraine is working in various areas: political, diplomatic, economic, social and humanitarian, legal and Human Rights, informational. It is the latter of the above factors that becomes one of the most important components in the return process since information communication provides immediate information on the current state in Crimea, forms the basis for analytical work and further construction of a de-occupation strategy. Repressive measures in Crimea against the Ukrainian media, a ban on the entry of international and Ukrainian monitoring missions have created conditions for representatives of civil society to perform the function of providing information. This phenomenon was called «Crimean citizen journalism» and became a characteristic post-occupation phenomenon of the information sphere in Crimea. An analysis of a survey of Crimean citizen journalists shows that there is an active and mobile community in Crimea that tries to provide informational and Human Rights nonviolent resistance to the occupation. The overwhelming majority of journalists are united by religious and ethnic affiliation, which indicates that the occupation authorities are pursuing a directed repressive policy against representatives of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar people. By all indications, there is a hidden deportation in Crimea, which is focused on creating conditions for pressure and forcing the active part of the population to leave Crimea.

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