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Occupation authorities imposed the labor laws and regulations of the Russian Federation on Crimean workers, limited worker rights, and created barriers to freedom of association, collective bargaining, and the ability to strike. Trade unions are formally protected under Russian law but limited in practice. As in both Ukraine and Russia, employers were often able to engage in antiunion discrimination and violate collective bargaining rights. The pro-Russian authorities threatened to nationalize property owned by Ukrainian labor unions in Crimea. Ukrainians who did not accept Russian citizenship faced job discrimination in all sectors of the economy. Only holders of Russian national identification cards were allowed to work in “government” and municipal positions. Labor activists believed that unions were threatened in Crimea to accept “government” policy without question and faced considerable restrictions on advocating for their members.

Although no official data were available, experts estimated there was growing participation in the underground economy in Crimea.

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