



**Permanent Mission of Ukraine**  
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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**Statement on “Remembrance of the victims of political repressions  
of the communist totalitarian regime”**

As for delivery by the Delegation of Ukraine  
to the 1146<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Permanent Council,  
18 May 2017

**Mr. Chairman,**

Today my country commemorates the anniversary of the 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatar people from their native Crimean soil by the Soviet regime. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine has recognised this forcible deportation as genocide of the Crimean Tatar people.

More than 200 thousand Crimean Tatars were moved by force to Siberia, the Urals and Central Asia and the very name of the Crimean Tatar people was effectively banned. The deportation effected the entire ethnic Crimean Tatar population as well as Ukrainians, Russians, Karaims and Romas from mixed marriages, at that time about a fifth of the total population of the Crimean peninsula. The horrible conditions en route resulted into deaths of estimated over 7 thousand Crimean Tatars, almost 30 thousand Crimean Tatars died within one year because of starvation and disease.

The deportation was organized by Stalin and his accomplices as a form of collective punishment for alleged Crimean Tatars' collaboration with the Nazis during the war. Only in 1967 a Soviet decree revoked the unfounded charges against Crimean Tatars, but they were not allowed to return to Crimea from exile until mid-1980s.

After renewal of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the Government of Ukraine undertook consistent efforts to provide Crimean Tatars with necessary resources for their resettlement and integration into the Ukrainian society, cherishing their history, culture and traditions.

However, since Russia's aggression against Ukraine in 2014 and attempted annexation of the Crimean peninsula the Crimean Tatar indigenous people have again encountered the plight of large-scale restrictions, political repressions and persecutions, carried out by the occupying authorities. Nearly 20,000 Crimean Tatars have been forced to flee their homeland, while those who remain have been harassed, intimidated and persecuted. The traditional commemorative events on 18 May, a day when for years people used to peacefully assemble to mourn the victims of 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars, were banned by the occupying authorities.

The repressions are epitomised in the ban of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people declared by the Russian authorities to be an “extremist organization” in resemblance of the patterns of the totalitarian Soviet regime.

We expect the Russian Federation to immediately fulfill the order of the International Court of Justice which instituted provisional measures obliging Russia, in particular, to refrain from maintaining or imposing limitations on the ability of the Crimean Tatar community to conserve its representative institutions, including the Mejlis.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The deportation of the Crimean Tatar people was a horrifying and tragic chapter in a series of inhumane crimes committed by the communist totalitarian regime. Every third Sunday of May Ukraine commemorates the victims of political repressions. Next Sunday will mark 80 years since the beginning of the campaign of atrocities, called the Great Terror of 1937-1938. All nations of the former Soviet Union were affected by the blood-chilling acts of repression. The Ukrainian nation suffered again just a few years after the genocide of the Ukrainian people – the man-made Holodomor (famine) that took away lives of estimated seven million people.

The scale of repressions during the Great Terror was overwhelming. Hundreds of thousands were arbitrarily executed by so called “troikas” or sent to Gulags in Siberia to be punished with hard labour and often death. People with disabilities were executed because they could not perform at work. The repressions targeted, in particular, farmers, national minority groups and people from different walks of life, labeled by the communist regime as “enemies of the people” or foreign spies. Within months of launching the terror campaign in 1937 the repressive organs reported the exposure of 87 insurgency and 365 subversive anti-Soviet groups in Kyiv oblast of Ukraine alone. In some instances show trials were staged to substantiate the persecutions, like the notorious Moscow show trials which handed out verdicts on self-incriminating confessions of the accused. Only many years after it became known that all of these confessions were extracted under torture or provided to save lives of the innocent close ones.

It is estimated that within the two years of 1937-1938 over 1,5 million people were accused and arrested under the pretext of anti-Soviet activities, nearly 700 thousand of them were shot dead. This horrifying figure means that about 1 thousand people were executed on a daily basis.

For decades the communist totalitarian regime attempted to hide these crimes and their scale behind propaganda and lies aiming to erase the memory about the Great Terror and its victims. Only the fall of the Soviet communist regime and access to secret archived documents allowed to shed light on the gravity and magnitude of crimes of the regime against the citizens.

Remembering the millions of innocent victims of the Soviet terror campaigns, we denounce the present increasing attempts, observed in the Russian Federation, to exonerate their masterminds, to diminish the gravity of the crimes and, moreover, to glorify Stalin and his accomplices who doomed millions to death and ordeals.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In 1990 Copenhagen Document the OSCE participating States agreed to “clearly and unequivocally condemn totalitarianism”. This commitment retains its high relevance. Remembering the victims of totalitarian regimes, it is important to make sure that the tragic chapters of the past are not forgotten, including the grave violations of human rights and freedoms which had led to these tragedies. We should support continuing historic research and prevent any attempts of glorification of Stalinism and its criminal methods in the OSCE area.

It must remain our collective responsibility to uphold respect for the OSCE commitments in the human dimension, without any “exclusion zones”, as the core part of the OSCE comprehensive approach to security.

**Thank you, Mr. Chairman.**