



Permanent Mission of Ukraine
to the International Organizations in Vienna

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Statement
on “72nd Anniversary of the Deportation of the Crimean Tatar People
by the Soviet regime”

As delivered by the Delegation of Ukraine
to the 1100th meeting of the Permanent Council,
12 May 2016

Mr. Chairman,

On 18 May 2016 Ukraine will commemorate the 72nd anniversary of one of the most tragic pages in the history of the Crimean Tatar people – the 1944 deportation by the Soviet regime.

More than 238 thousand Crimean Tatars were forcibly moved to Siberia, the Urals and Central Asia and the very name of the Crimean Tatar people was effectively banned. This includes the entire ethnic Crimean Tatar population, at that time about a fifth of the total population of the Crimean peninsula. According to available data, horrible transportation conditions resulted into deaths of over 7000 Crimean Tatars *en route*. Almost 110,000 deported Crimean Tatars died between 1 July 1944 and 1 January 1947 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 1942-1943. Although in 1967 a Soviet decree withdrew the charges against Crimean Tatars, they were not allowed to return to Crimea from exile until the mid-1980s.

Since renewal of Ukraine's independence in 1991, the Government of Ukraine undertook all efforts to provide Crimean Tatars with necessary resources for their resettlement and integration into the Ukrainian society. Ukraine cherishes the history, culture and traditions of the Crimean Tatars, including by recognizing the Crimean Tatar people as indigenous people.

In November 2015 the Ukrainian Parliament, guided by the provisions of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, has recognized the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944 as the genocide of the Crimean Tatar people. Yesterday, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine adopted an Address calling on the UN, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the world leaders and

all members of the international community to commemorate the victims of the genocide of the Crimean Tatar people, as well as to condemn the violations of the rights and freedoms of the Crimean Tatar people by the Russian Federation.

Distinguished colleagues,

Following Russia's illegal occupation and annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in 2014, the Crimean Tatar indigenous people is now facing again large-scale repressions and persecutions by the occupying authorities.

Two years of illegal occupation have been marked by blatant violations of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms on the Crimean peninsula. The situation is characterized by the impunity for the offenders.

Nearly 20,000 Crimean Tatars have been forced to flee their homeland since February 2014 fearful for their safety. Those who remain face intimidation and persecutions. The Crimean Tatars have been subjected to illegal and politically motivated arrests, including the cases of Deputy Chairman of the Crimean Tatar Mejlis Ahtem Ciygoz along with 13 Crimean Tatar activists. The leaders of the Crimean Tatar people Mustafa Dzhemilev and Refat Chubarov have been barred from entry to their homeland by the occupation authorities. The Mejlis, Islamic religious schools and mosques have been exposed to raids and searches. This morning news are coming again from the occupied Crimea about raids of homes and arrests of Crimean Tatars.

The repressions culminated recently in a ban of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people by declaring it an "extremist organization". The ban of a highest representative body of the Crimean Tatar people constitutes a grave violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including those enshrined in the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

In effect, what we presently witness in the occupied Crimea amounts to a deliberate policy of ethnocide of the Crimean Tatar people, following the pattern of the totalitarian Soviet regime.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine strongly condemns the actions of the occupying authorities, which constitute a clear violation of fundamental freedoms and human rights and must not be allowed to happen in the OSCE community.

We see the imperative of continuous active engagement of the OSCE Chairmanship, the OSCE Institutions, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and the participating States in seeking observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the illegally occupied Crimean peninsula. We encourage the ODIHR and the HCNM to closely monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 2015 HRAM Report on Crimea.

We urge the Russian occupying authorities to take steps to halt the systemic violations of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, to stop the persecution of the Crimean Tatar indigenous population of

Crimea and to immediately release all illegally detained Ukrainian citizens in the occupied Crimea.

Distinguished colleagues,

In 2014 and 2015 the traditional commemorative events on 18 May, a day when for years people used to peacefully assemble to mourn the victims of 1944 criminal deportation of the Crimean Tatars, were banned by the occupying authorities.

We call on the Russian Federation as the occupying authority exercising de-facto control in Crimea to refrain from hindering the Crimean Tatars to exercise their right to peaceful assembly and the proper commemoration of the 72nd anniversary of the deportation.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.