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PC.DEL/539/19
17 May 2019

ENGLISH
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
AT THE 1228th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

16 May 2019

On the anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars

Mr. Chairperson,

The Crimean Tatars suffered repression in 1944 and were deported from their homeland. The Crimean Tatar people are part of a multi-ethnic Russia. We recall this tragedy with them. Furthermore, practical measures have been undertaken in our country for the full rehabilitation and preservation of their language and culture.

This has been possible, above all, thanks to the reunification of Crimea with Russia. In fact, the authorities in Kyiv effectively ignored the fate of the Crimean Tatars, not to mention their situation on the peninsula, until 2014.

It was in that year that major initiatives were implemented to support the Crimean Tatar ethnic group. On 21 April 2014, the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, signed Decree No. 268 on measures to rehabilitate the Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek, Crimean Tatar and German peoples and to provide State support for their revival and development. The Italian people were later added to this list. A set of measures was elaborated to restore historical justice through the political, social and intellectual revival of peoples subjected to illegal political repression on ethnic and other grounds, including administrative expulsions. Since 2014, Law No. 1107-1 of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of 26 April 1991 on the Rehabilitation of Repressed Peoples and Law No. 1761-1 of the Russian Federation of 18 October 1991 on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression have applied in full to the Crimean Tatars.

The participation of Crimean Tatars in representative bodies, the government and the local administrations of the Republic of Crimea is ensured. Passports as citizens of the Russian Federation have been issued to the vast majority – over 90 per cent – of Crimean Tatars.

According to the State Committee for Inter-Ethnic Relations and Deported Peoples of the Republic of Crimea, 80 local and 14 regional autonomous ethnic and cultural organizations representing 19 nationalities are registered in Crimea. The Council of Crimean Tatars, which included prominent Crimean Tatar personalities, was established in March 2018 under the Head of the Republic of Crimea.

The Republic of Crimea State Programme for 2018–2020 to support the rehabilitated Crimean peoples was approved in 2018. A similar programme for 2015–2017 had been successfully implemented. The programme calls for the targeted development of places with high concentrations of repressed peoples, particularly Crimean Tatars.

Equal language rights are guaranteed on the peninsula. The Crimean Tatar language was recognized in the 2014 Constitution as an official language of the Republic of Crimea, alongside Russian and Ukrainian. These are not just words. The number of students receiving their education in the Crimean Tatar language is growing. A new Crimean Tatar school for 900 students was opened in the 2017–2018 school year. The Engineering and Pedagogical University trains Crimean Tatar personnel. Kindergartens are being built in places with a large Crimean Tatar population. A complete set of textbooks for secondary education in the Crimean Tatar language is available. Until 2014, the urgent social demand for such projects was ignored.

I emphasize that the legal status of the Crimean Tatar language in the form in which it exists in modern Russia would be absolutely impossible within the framework of current Ukrainian legislation and the political realities of that country. The adoption of the Law on Ensuring the Functioning of the Ukrainian Language as the State Language is clear confirmation of this. Even with all the exceptions in it for the Crimean Tatar language, it still does not enjoy the same status as an official language as it does in Russian Crimea.

The Crimean Tatar culture is being supported. Large-scale cultural events using public funds are organized for returnees. Literature is published in the Crimean Tatar language, and support is provided for the media, including *Yani Dunya* (New World), *Qirim* and *Yildiz* (Star). For the first time in the history of Crimea a Crimean Tatar television channel Millet (Nation) and radio station Vetan (Motherland) have started broadcasting. A Crimean Tatar public broadcasting company has been established. The network and airtime are being expanded and new programmes are appearing. These two media outlets alone employ around 200 people. The Ismail Gasprinsky media centre has been established and issues publications in the Crimean Tatar language or about Crimean Tatars. There are Crimean Tatar libraries and an academic theatre.

A new cathedral mosque and muftiate building are being constructed in a prominent place in Simferopol. They are scheduled to open this autumn. In its day, the Ukrainian Government did not even think about providing significant prayer facilities for Crimean Tatars. They were obliged to build mosques without the necessary permits, which the Ukrainian authorities refused to issue. Documents of this nature are now being processed.

Statements by foreign public and political figures who have been in this region of Russia in recent years testify to the absence of ethnic discrimination in Crimea. It has been visited by Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek, French, German, Israeli and Czech parliamentarians, the former Prime Minister of Japan and journalists from Poland. In March this year, Crimea was once again visited by parliamentarians from France and a group of journalists from Italy, Bulgaria, Lithuania, France and other countries.

Thank you for your attention.