



STATEMENT BY TURKEY

2014 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting Working Session 10 – Rights of persons belonging to national minorities Warsaw, 29 September 2014

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

We take the floor today to reiterate our concern with the repeated and increasing infringements upon the rights of minority groups in Crimea. We believe that the safety and welfare of all ethnic groups in Crimea should remain high among our priorities. We have also repeatedly underlined our special sensitivity and concern for the security and well-being of the Crimean Tatar minority.

We would like to take this opportunity to once again commend High Commissioner Thors' valuable efforts and engagement within the framework of the crisis in Ukraine, including her visit to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. We appreciate her continued interest in the situation of the Crimean Tatars and other minorities.

Mr. Moderator

The deteriorating human rights situation in Crimea was highlighted in this summer's report of the Human Rights Assessment Mission conducted jointly by ODIHR and the HCNM. The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission has also drawn attention to the human rights violations in Crimea in all its reports to date.

Due to the illegal and illegitimate de facto situation in Crimea, which Turkey continues to regard as part of Ukraine, the Crimean Tatars, like the vast majority of the peninsula's population, were deprived of their fundamental right to take part in last April's Presidential elections and, thus, to share in the democratic expression of Ukraine's national will. It is unfortunately very likely that they will also be hindered from participating in next October's early parliamentary elections.

In May, the Crimean Tatars were hindered from officially commemorating the 70th anniversary of their tragic mass deportations in the Soviet era after the banning of large gatherings in Crimea. They could only organize impromptu ceremonies and even these rallies were disrupted by low-flying military helicopters.

Mr. Mustafa Kırımoglu (Cemilev), leader of the Crimean Tatar people, and Mr. Refat Chubarov, President of the Crimean Tatar National Assembly, continue to be denied entry into their homeland of Crimea. These entry bans are a flagrant violation of international law.

We have been informed of many instances of harassment, abduction and murder of Crimean Tatar activists. Harassment of and attacks against Crimean Tatars journalists also continue, as regularly highlighted by the Representative on Freedom of the Media.

We are also deeply concerned by the mounting pressure against the Crimean Tatar National Assembly, which is the sole legitimate representative body of the Crimean Tatar people. Earlier this month there was an armed raid on the Assembly. Similar raids were also conducted on the houses of a number of Assembly members. We condemn such unacceptable methods of pressure to intimidate the Crimean Tatars, who are an indigenous people of the peninsula defending their democratic rights through peaceful means. Confident that the international community will not remain silent in the face of these repressive measures, we call on those responsible to desist from such acts.

In conclusion, we would like to emphasize once again that Turkey will continue to closely follow developments in Crimea with a particular emphasis on the security and well-being of the Crimean Tatars.

Thank you.