

## **Youth Human Rights Movement**

### **Working Session 11: Humanitarian issues and other commitments**

#### **Statement on behalf of Youth Group for Tolerance (Krasnodar) and Human Rights Center “Memorial” (Moscow) who are conducting the monitoring of ethnic minorities in Krasnodar krai (Russia).**

Krasnodar region is the southern territory that will host the Olympic Games in 2014 in Sochi city. If we try to speak objectively, along with the obvious economic prosperity of the region we face a number of certain problems that are calling for international attention.

Firstly, after the resettlement program of Meshetian Turks from the region into the USA as refugees seeking shelter from persecution in the region, the local authorities have publicly expressed the opinion, “that the problem of Meshetian Turks has successfully been resolved”. We consider that the exodus of the whole ethnic group from the region is the failure to act against discrimination and for integration. More than that, the problem of Meshetian Turks is far from being resolved. Hundreds of people were denied from getting the refugee status. Families are broken now, still residing in the hostile environment.

Secondly, along with the Meshetian Turks problem there exist ethnic minority groups that are refused to be given citizenship though living on the territory for more than 15-20 years, like Batumi kurds kurmanch, like ezids, that came after the devastating earthquake in the late 80-s in Armenia, hemshils, etc. These minority groups reside in the isolation from the basic rights and freedoms (e.g. cannot obtain Russian citizenship or local registration which makes them illegal on the territory of the region), in contrast to other “accepted ethnic minorities” that are allowed to take part in multiethnic holidays, and given offices in the Multicultural Centers. Without citizenship youth from the above-mentioned communities was detained by local police on the way to the seminar that we held especially to discuss the problem of citizenship. On the other hand, such a group as kozaks enjoys all the freedoms and support from the authorities, monopolizing the niche that is to be diverse.

Summing it up, I would like to underline that authorities of the region that hosts more than 5 million dwellers, position different kinds of multiethnic holidays as a counteraction against intolerance. It is common knowledge that ethnic cooking festivals only are incapable of effectively fighting xenophobia, solving the problems of integration of migrants both legally and culturally.

This situation along with the growth of xenophobia towards foreign students and other vulnerable groups in the region, displacement of ethnic minorities from the territories allotted for sport facilities in Sochi breeds concern especially with the coming international major sport event in 2014.

The details about this and other problems can be found on the website of Human Rights Center “Memorial” [www.memo.ru](http://www.memo.ru).