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PC.DEL/746/21  
20 May 2021

ENGLISH  
Original: RUSSIAN

Delegation of the Russian Federation

**STATEMENT BY MR. ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, AT THE  
1314th MEETING OF THE OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL  
VIA VIDEO TELECONFERENCE**

20 May 2021

**On the 77th anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars**

Mr. Chairperson,

It is 77 years since the tragic events in Crimea related to the expulsion from the peninsula of the Crimean Tatar people and a number of other ethnic groups.

The memory is still alive and carefully maintained today. On 18 May, the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Deportation of the Peoples of Crimea, numerous events were held on the peninsula, attended by residents and the authorities of this Russian region. On 16 May, for example, Crimean Tatar youths climbed Chatyrdag mountain, an annual event symbolizing the Crimean Tatars' long journey to their homeland. There were also numerous flower-laying ceremonies at the memorials and the "light a fire in your heart" event. As part of the latter, candles were lit in the windows of houses all over Crimea in memory of the victims and the dead. The leaders of the Republic visited the memorial complex under construction at Siren railway station in Crimea, from where the first trainloads of Crimean Tatars departed on 18 May 1944. The memorial will be completed in November this year.

Speaking of historical memory, until 2014, when the region was part of Ukraine, the authorities in Kyiv paid little attention to the plight of the Crimean Tatar people and their ordeal. And they have certainly not done enough to improve the situation of this ethnic group. On the contrary, this painful topic has been used for political purposes to stir up inter-ethnic tension in the region. It is noteworthy that discrimination against Crimean Tatars by the Ukrainian authorities has been repeatedly pointed out by authoritative international bodies, including the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities. This is not to mention the water blockade imposed by the Ukrainian Government on the population of Crimea, of which the Crimean Tatar people are also a part.

Only after Crimea's reunification with Russia did active measures begin to improve the situation of Crimean Tatars and other ethnic groups on the peninsula. Thus, work continues in the region to overcome the negative historical legacy. Decree No. 268 of the President of the Russian Federation of 21 April 2014 on measures to rehabilitate the Armenian, Bulgarian, Crimean Tatar, German, Greek and Italian peoples and

to provide State support for their revival and development is being implemented. According to the head of the region, Sergey Aksyonov, this decree “has opened up a fundamentally new stage in the development of inter-ethnic relations in Crimea and become an important basis for national policy in the region”. 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 Soviet Federative Socialist Republic of 18 October 1991 on the Rehabilitation of Victims of Political Repression apply in full to the Crimean Tatars.

Measures for the rehabilitation of repressed peoples are being implemented under the Federal Target Programme for Social and Economic Development of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol until 2025. Houses, schools, kindergartens and cultural centres are being built and ethnocultural events organized.

There is genuine linguistic equality on the peninsula. The Crimean Tatar language was recognized in the 2014 Constitution of Crimea as an official language of the Republic of Crimea, alongside Russian and Ukrainian. Today, there are various opportunities to study it in schools and at institutions of higher education. The number of pupils taught in the Crimean Tatar language is steadily increasing. A total of 16 Crimean Tatar-language schools operate in this Russian region. The Crimean Federal University and the Crimean Engineering Pedagogical University have Crimean Tatar language departments. There is a research institute of Crimean Tatar philology, history and the culture of the Crimean ethnic groups at the Crimean Engineering Pedagogical University, and a centre for multi-ethnic youth culture is being established.

The authorities promote the spiritual, religious and cultural life of Crimean Tatars. Mosques are being built, renovated and restored. Construction under the patronage of President Putin of a cathedral mosque for 4,000 people and a muftiate building are nearing completion in Simferopol. The famous Bakhchisaray Historical, Cultural and Archaeological Museum-Reserve is undergoing extensive restoration. There are autonomous local and regional ethnic culture organizations. In addition, around 30 Crimean Tatar community associations, including Milliy Firqa, Qirim Birligi (Crimean Unity) and Qirim (Crimea), operate on the peninsula. Numerous publications are produced in the national language with State support (*Yani Dunya*, *Qirim*, *Yildiz* and others).

Crimean Tatar media are developing. There are currently more than 50. The Public Crimean Tatar Television and Radio Company, which was established in September 2015 and includes the television channel Millet and the radio station Vatan Sedasi, is being actively developed. Significant cultural and educational work is carried out by the Ismail Gasprinsky Media Centre, which is the main platform for the support of national print media.

With the support of the Crimean authorities, Crimean Tatar national holidays and festivals, such as Khidirlez, are regularly celebrated. In February, Crimeans honoured the memory of Amet-Khan Sultan, twice Hero of the Soviet Union and a distinguished Soviet test pilot, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of his death. The unveiling of a monument to the aviator in Simferopol was timed to coincide with this date.

The scale and effectiveness of the Russian authorities’ programmes for development of the peninsula disproves the theory of discrimination against Crimean Tatars in modern Russia insisted on by external sources. In a country that cares for every people living in it and seeks to restore historical justice to the repressed peoples, this is impossible. A simple visit to this dynamic region would be sufficient confirmation of this. Welcome to Crimea!

Thank you for your attention.