

Distinguished Chair,  
Distinguished Delegates of the Indigenous Peoples,

It is my great honor to welcome you on behalf of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People - the representative body of the Crimean Tatars.

Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People has initiated an International Forum that focuses on the restoration of the rights of the Crimean Tatar people and their security in their homeland; their socio-economic development in Ukraine, and the formulation and adoption of legal measures aimed at restoring the rights of the Crimean Tatar people.

The total population of the Crimean Tatar people was deported from their homeland in 1944. Until 1989, they were forcibly kept in exile in Central Asia by the Soviet Communist regime, during which time they were deprived of any opportunities to learn their native language, history, religion, and culture, and were subjected to a brutal assimilation processes.

At the present time, the situation of the Crimean Tatar people continues to deteriorate. Although Ukraine gained its independence 22 years ago, it did not formulate or pass any legislation aimed at eliminating the consequences of the criminal deportations of 1944.

Today, the discrimination against the Crimean Tatar people is continuing in new forms, such as:

- The restriction of political representation of the Crimean Tatars in the executive power of Ukraine and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea;
- A sharp reduction of state funding for the improvement programs of formerly deported peoples;
- The denial of the Crimean Tatar language as the official language;
- The catastrophic situation of the preschool and school education in the Crimean Tatar language.

Under the circumstances, the resolution of Crimean Tatar problems should include:

- Constructive and effective cooperation between the authorities of Ukraine, Crimea and the only qualified and authorized elective body - the Kurultai of the Crimean Tatar People and the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People;
- Involvement of international organizations in assistance to the Ukrainian government and to the Crimean Tatar people in the resolution of the genocidal consequences of the Crimean Tatar deportation on May 18, 1944.

The International Forum, which was the initiative of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, was supported by the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, as well as by the governments of member states of the European Union, the USA and Canada.

Regardless of the requests by the OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities, the organizers of the International Forum, Ukrainian government has not yet demonstrated its willingness to host this Forum, which aims to focus on addressing the consequences of the criminal deportation of the Crimean Tatar people.

We ask the international community to support the initiatives of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), and demonstrate to the government of Ukraine their willingness to

assist in such a Forum that will work on the restoration of the rights of the Crimean Tatar people and their security in their ancestral homeland.

Thank you for your attention.

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