

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues**Eleventh session****New York, 7-18 May 2012****Item 8****Half-day discussion on Central and Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia.**

**Joint Statement
of International Public organization
Foundation for research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea
And Crimean Tatar People's Front**

**Dear Mr. Chairman!
Brothers and Sisters, Ladies and Gentlemen!**

The Indigenous Peoples of the region have been waiting for this item of the agenda several years. Now we have a rare chance to present to the highest level UN body for Indigenous Peoples our needs and pains. Before I will go to the topic I will make a preliminary note. The name of our region is Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, not only Russia. Naturally Russia is the biggest part of our region however it must not be a reason to ignore the situation and problems of Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine, States of Central Asia and Transcaucasia, many of which still have no access to the international forums in order to present their concerns and furthermore have no idea about the possibilities to participate in UN activities. I have several examples of that unproductive approach: all members of Permanent Forum since the very beginning have been selected exclusively from Russia and mostly from the same organization. When the Madam High Commissioner on Human Rights visited Russia, she only visited one country even though she believed she had visited the entire Indigenous Region, the same with the visit of Mr. Special Reporter James Anaja. For years, the Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and Fellowship Program for Indigenous Peoples consistently refuse to finance the nominees from other countries of the region with the exception of Russia. I am sure that this approach is not in compliance with the spirit of equality and Indigenous brotherhood and must be revised to include a more wide and balanced participation of all countries and Indigenous Peoples of our region.

Now I am going to my country of Ukraine, which is the biggest country of region after Russia. About 15 years ago, Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine had a lot of hopes and positive expectations due to the fact that the then new Constitution of Ukraine, included the special provision of Article 11 in accordance with which, The State shall promote development of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious identity of all indigenous peoples of Ukraine. Article 92 states: The following matters shall be determined exclusively by laws of Ukraine:

3) the rights of indigenous peoples.

It means that by no any another way but only by the Legislation adopted by Ukrainian Parliament the rights of Indigenous Peoples can be established, guaranteed and protected.

16 years after the adoption of that Constitution, the Ukrainian State has done nothing to honor it's obligations under these articles. In fact, the opposite is

happening. As time goes on, the policy of the Ukrainian State towards its Indigenous Peoples is consequently worsening:

1. Ukraine was and still remains one of 11 states which has not supported the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. In domestic policy Ukraine officials refuse to recognise the very existence of Indigenous Peoples in Ukraine as justification to refuse to support the Declaration.
2. No one Indigenous People of Ukraine has been recognised as individual. Crimean Tatars, Karaimes, Krymchaks and Urums are all treated as National Minorities in accordance with very weak Ukrainian Law on National Minorities.

3. Since the adoption of the new constitution in 1996, the Ukrainian State handed our lands, real estate and material assets still remaining after deportation of 1944 in State ownership through so-called privatization to the non-Indigenous settlers or their descendants brought to the Crimea after our total deportation in 1944. The state continues to destroy and plunder our cultural heritage and our archives. They misappropriate our cemeteries and sacral sites by exploiting them for tourism, commercial purposes or even the construction of the public toilets.

4. The Ukrainian State arranges the criminal prosecution of the activists struggling for their rights. The only prisoner of conscience recognised by Amnesty International in Ukraine is Crimean Tatar Danial Ametov, the claimer of land rights and religious equality.

5. May 18 is Day of Deportation and Genocide of Crimean Tatar People. All attempts of 17 Crimean Tatar public organisations united to the Crimean Tatar People's Front to convince the Ukrainian Authorities to adopt The Law on Restoration of the Rights and Rehabilitation of Crimean Tatar People over the past several months have been rejected by Ukrainian authorities. Instead the Government makes preparations to suppress any probable popular unrest.

Mr.Chairman!

Taking into consideration all these extraordinary circumstances, I ask Permanent Forum to recommend to ECOSOC to consider a question about the temporary suspension of Ukraine's membership in the UN as a State, which systematically, brutally, and grossly violates Human Rights of entire peoples in contradiction with its obligations on International Law and UN Charter until it undertakes legal measures to restore the rights and to guarantee the status of Indigenous Crimean Tatar People and all Indigenous Peoples in Ukraine.

Thank you very much!