

18-th Session of the Permanent Forum on

Indigenous Issues

Agenda item 6

Statement

presented by Feride USEİNOVA,

Representative of Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People,

Representative of Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People

Aqşam şerifleriniz hayırlı olsun
Distinguished madam chair,
Honorable representatives of indigenous peoples,
Dear brothers and sisters,

As you all know our homeland- Crimea, is under the occupation of the Russian Federation since 2014.

Russian occupational authorities started a campaign to erase the Crimean Tatar cultural heritage in the peninsula by damaging their monuments and architectural works. The most striking example is the Russian so called “restoration project” of the Khan’s Palace located in *Bağçasaray* Crimea.

The Khan’s Palace is a compact architectural ensemble consisting of 17 buildings and 9 inner closed courtyards. The Khan’s Palace was the main residence of the Crimean Khans from 1530 till 1783.¹

Since 1783 a large number of valuable museum exhibits have been taken out from the Khan’s Palace to Russia. Unfortunately, this continues since the beginning of the occupation of 2014.

The Khan’s Palace is the unique example of the Crimean Tatar architectural tradition. Its value was honored by the inclusion of this

¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/1820/>

monument into the UNESCO's World Heritage Tentative List in 2003, but the follow-up work for establishing its international status remains unfinished.²

I regret to inform you that Russia is demolishing this Crimean Tatar monument. As it was recorded by the UNESCO report in September 7, 2018, under the guise of so-called restoration they destroyed timber roof constructions, tie beams, transversal beams, murals, stained-glass windows etc. The most alarming fact is that all these restoration works are conducted by the so-called specialists who have neither experience nor qualification in restoration of historical buildings.³

Besides, all the excavations in Crimea are conducted without any consultations with representatives of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people. In addition, the historiography of Crimea is being rewritten.

Recommendations for the Russian Federation

All excavations and restoration works in Crimea must be conducted in consultation with the representative body of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people – Mejlis.

All excavations must be carried out with the permission of the Ukrainian authorities.

All items of the cultural heritage of the Crimean Tatar people must be returned back to Crimea.

Russia must stop falsifying the historiography of Crimea.

Thank you very much for your attention.

² <https://www.newsweek.com/russian-occupiers-are-wantonly-destroying-crimean-tatar-palace-783007>

³ UNESCO Raporu

