

## THE CRIMEAN TATARS' STATEMENT

2008 04 21  
# 21

**Madam chairperson, esteemed delegates and observers!**

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues for giving our organization this opportunity to report on the ongoing human rights violations perpetrated against the Crimean Tatars, one of the indigenous peoples of Crimea.

It was our sincere hope that we would report some positive developments on the status of Crimean Tatars' human rights issues in Crimea. We are saddened to report, **madam chairperson**, that the human rights violations against the indigenous people of Crimea, the Crimean Tatars has significantly increased. Since our last report to this honorable forum, not only our people were attacked and beaten, but our cemeteries were also vandalized and desecrated.

On November 1, 2007, a large group of Russian paramilitary group called "Sevastopol Cossacks" armed with clubs and other weapons, attacked Crimean Tatars on Balaklava Street in Simferopol, Crimea. There were 200 "Berkut" special forces present, but no arrest was made during or after the attack.

On November 6, 2007, a 600 strong "Berkut" special militia forces attacked and destroyed small Crimean Tatar business establishments in Ai-Petri, Yalta. Crimean Tatar businessmen and their supporters were severely beaten by "Berkut" forces, four of them needed hospitalization.

**Madam chairperson**, barely three months had elapsed since the "Berkut", the special Ukrainian militia forces attacked and brutally beat Crimean Tatars in November of 2007 Ai-Petri, near Yalta, and destroyed their small business establishments. The same militia forces were on site during the Balaklava Street attack on Crimean Tatars by the Sevastopol Cossacks on November 1, 2007.

While Crimean Tatars were yet to recover from the shock of the aforementioned attacks, in early hours on February 10, 2008 in town of Seitler (Nzynyohirsky) in Crimea, a group of vandals broke into the Crimean Tatar Muslim cemetery, killed the watchdog and then ransacked and desecrated 270 Crimean Tatar headstones.

The ink on our last "Appeal to World Public" and to Ukrainian government in particular, to stop the violent attacks on Crimean Tatars and their sacred places had not dried yet when we received reports and photographs of yet another vicious attack on Crimean Tatar Muslim cemetery in Chistenkoe, near Simferopol on April 11, 2008. This news came just a day after 1000 Ukrainian "Berkut" special militia forces forcibly evicted 16 Crimean Tatar families who after almost ten years of waiting had no other choice but occupy the building and lived in that unfinished building on Yubileynaya Street in Alushta.

One photograph of the Chistenkoe attack, among several sent to us instantaneously by Nadir Bekir, president of Foundation of Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea stands out as it conveys the dangerous and critical ethnic situation in Crimea. Right behind the vandalized and destroyed Muslim headstones, on the wall one sees a graffiti written in red ink that reads as follows:

"TATARI VON IS KRIMA!- TATARS GET OUT OF CRIMEA!". Next to this ultimatum a hanging noose and next to it the Crimean Tatar national symbol "Tarak Tamga" is crossed off. As we stated in our previous appeal to world public, this vicious attack is just a continuation of series of well planned attacks on the indigenous people of Crimea, the Crimean Tatars, by the chauvinist forces who are determined to destabilize the peaceful Crimean peninsula. As always, the authorities expressed their sadness and act as if they are shocked by these barbaric desecrations of Crimean Tatar cemeteries, yet so far the perpetrators are not arrested and have not brought to justice. We are puzzled to see thousands of "Berkut" special militia forces marching in to evict 16 innocent Crimean Tatar families, but our cemeteries after numerous attacks still remain unprotected. What are the authorities waiting for? Are they waiting for these hoodlums to attack the Crimean Tatar homes?

These vicious attacks are just continuation of series of attacks on the indigenous people of Crimea, Crimean Tatars, by the chauvinist forces who are determined to destabilize the peaceful Crimean peninsula.

We are afraid that Crimean Tatars' patient is running thin, and after this latest attack on their cemetery they began to ask their leaders about taking the safety and protection of their families and properties into their own hands. Once again the Crimean Tatar leaders advised against it and asked Crimean Tatars to remain calm and patient. The Crimean Tatar leaders again asked their people to "turn the other cheek" to avoid bloodshed. But how long can they keep "turning the other cheek?" Crimean Tatars' patience is running out. The peaceful cry of the Crimean Tatars always has been "We have no other homeland, but Crimea" They have no other place to go, they are in their ancestral homeland to stay, and their goal is to coexist there peacefully with all other nationalities as a people and a nation.

**Madam chairperson**, we apologize if these are repetitious, we have no choice but repeat our demand year after year as the human rights conditions have not changed significantly in the past sixteen years. We, therefore, once again appeal to the **United Nations Organization** and world public for support of the Crimean Tatars' always peaceful national struggle for their human and national rights. We also ask the **Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues** to join us in our appeal to the Ukrainian National government for an immediate:

- Restoration of the human and national rights of the Crimean Tatar people!
- Recognition of the Crimean Tatars as indigenous people of the Crimea!
- Recognition of the Crimean Tatar National Mejlis as the de Jure representative of the Crimean Tatar people!
- Recognition of the Crimean Tatar language as one of the official languages of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea!
- Redress all the Crimean Tatar losses including land, homes and other properties!
- Return of all Crimean Tatars [living in exile] to their ancestral homeland under government sponsorship, and help them resettle in Crimea, their ancestral homeland!

- Protection and Safety of our sacred places, our cemeteries so our deceased may rest in peace!

**CRIMEAN TATARS HAVE NO OTHER HOMELAND, BUT CRIMEA! DON'T LET CRIMEA BECOME UKRAINE'S TIBET! HELP US MAKE CRIMEA OUR PEACEFUL HOMELAND AGAIN!**

**Thank you, madam chairperson!**

Mubeyyin Batu Altan *MBA*

Research and Support of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea Foundation

[batu@prodigy.net](mailto:batu@prodigy.net)

April 21, 2008