

Madam chairperson, esteemed delegates and observers!

I would like to express my 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.

May 18, 2007 marks the 63rd anniversary of the former Soviet Government's genocide of the Crimean Tatar people. The entire Crimean Tatar population was brutally awakened and uprooted from their homes in the early morning hours of May 18, 1944.

This was, indeed, a pre-planned, well organized and well executed operation by the Soviet authorities. The Soviet Government "shipped off" every single Crimean Tatar, with the exception of those in the four fishing villages on the Arabat Strip whom they forgot by mistake and all of whom they drowned in the Azov Sea by July 7, 1944.

The mass deportation was carried out without any resistance as most of the Crimean Tatars residing in Crimea at the time were children, women and the elderly. There were "238.000 people (Crimean Tatars) deported in all, 113.000 were children (under age 18) and 93.000 women...of these 110.000 (46.2%) perished." (A Chronicle of Current Events, 1975, N: 28-31., p.148.) The able bodied Crimean Tatars were either serving in the Soviet armed forces, or fighting against the Nazi forces in the Crimean Mountains. It must be pointed out that "...out of the total population (302.000) before the war there were 95.000 men over 18 years (of age); 53.000 fought in the army and 12.000 in the resistance and underground. 30.000 participants in the war perished..." (A Chronicle of Current Events. 1975 No. 28-31, pp.147-148)

As the Crimean Tatars throughout the world prepare to commemorate the 63rd Anniversary of Crimean Tatar Genocide and mass deportation, we must report that the socio-economic and political discrimination by the Ukrainian (successor of the USSR) and Crimean governments towards Crimean Tatars continues.

Crimean Tatars have yet to get their fair share in land distribution, housing, employment and education. Only one out of 9 Crimean Tatar children has the opportunity to be educated in his native language (*Yani Dunya* . November 30, 2006, p.2). The Crimean

Tatar language remains on the RED list of UNESCO as one of the endangered languages of the world.

- The Process of privatization of land per Ukrainian Land Code left 90% of the Crimean Tatars out of this process. Because of the discriminatory land privatization process 80% of Crimean Tatars who live in rural areas whose main source of income comes from land, are landless.
- Crimean Tatars' sacred cemeteries and monuments are constantly desecrated.
- Fifteen years after Ukraine won her independence, Crimean Tatars are still forced to stage peaceful demonstrations to protest the government's discriminatory land distribution policy. In order to stop these protest demonstrations, the judicial system uses both civil and criminal codes to punish the peaceful Crimean Tatar protestors. On January 11, 2007 the Ukrainian government passed a law "...**amending several legislative acts of Ukraine concerning strengthening the responsibility for squatting a land plot.**" Now the Crimean Tatars who are forced to occupy the land they tried to obtain through legitimate channels will be prosecuted and sentenced to seven to fifteen years in prison.
- Ukrainian authorities carry out a policy of segregation and ethnocide towards Crimean Tatars. The state has changed to a new level of persecution of the human rights organizations. "Cotton club 5", the five Crimean Tatars who are accused of attacking Russian youth in a bar named "Cotton" and sentenced in prison, in fact were punished for participation in squatting the land or support of these actions.
- Participants of protest demonstrations are intimidated. Authorities threaten them with punishment and use falsified or non-evidentiary documents provided by law enforcement officials to prosecute Crimean Tatars.

These are just a few examples of mistreatment of the indigenous Crimean Tatars by the government.

Madam chairperson

We appeal to ^{UNITED NATIONS ORGANIZATION} world public for support of the Crimean Tatars' always peaceful national struggle for their human and national rights. We also demand from the Ukrainian National government 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 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!*

CRIMEAN TATARS HAVE NO OTHER HOMELAND, BUT CRIMEA! HELP US MAKE CRIMEA OUR PEACEFUL HOMELAND AGAIN!

Thank You Madam chairperson!

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