

Statement  
On Total Violations the Linguistic and Educational Rights  
of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea

*Education, Language and the Human Rights of Minorities*

*Twelfth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues, Geneva, 28-29 November 2019*

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Since beginning the illegal occupation and attempt of annexation the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and City of Sevastopol (Crimea) by Russia, the linguistic and educational rights of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians in Crimea were extremely, disproportionately and arbitrarily limited by new de-facto authorities. The public school and classes with education on Ukrainian language were reorganised to ones with education on Russian; even two last schools, where till 2020 formally education must be partially on Ukrainian, de-facto educate pupils only on Russian that was irrefutably proved by the civil activists which monitored directly the relevant educational procedures. The number of school and classes with education on Crimean Tatar language also decreased substantially since 2014, and there is a strong pressure from the de-facto authorities and schools' management, governed by them, to the pupils' parents not to choose the Crimean Tatar language as a language of education.

Such parents' forced refusals allows to the occupier authorities to continue curtailing the system of education on Crimean Tatar language, created in Crimea before 2014. Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages in modern Crimea are used, only and formally, for symbolic issues like de-facto authorities signboards and certain protocol documents, they are forcibly driven out from areas of media, commerce and science. More, Russian de-facto authorities banned the usage Latin alphabet for Crimean Tatar language, which is more suitable for this language phonetic and is used by Crimean Tatars in diaspora and on Ukrainian mainland. At the same time the Crimean Tatar language, as the language of the indigenous people of Crimea – the Crimean Tatars, is in extremely dangerous situation. Currently, the Crimean Tatar language is listed by UNESCO as one of the endangered languages. In Ukraine, the Crimean Tatar language has the status of the language of the indigenous people of Ukraine and is the officially recognised language in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (Ukraine)<sup>1</sup>.

Such Russian illegal activities were confirmed in reports of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and marked in UN GA resolutions, so as in acts of Parliamentary Assemblies of Council of Europe and OSCE and of European Parliament, in UNESCO bodies' decisions. Modern practice of Russian illegal authorities on mass punitive actions against preserving and development the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian languages violates not only the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966, UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2007, UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, 1992 and European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, 1992.

Those Russian ongoing illegal activities, suppressing Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar language education and the community's educational institutions, are also the direct violation the provisions of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) that was reflected in case, initiated by Ukraine on application this Convention, that is pending in the International Court of Justice (ICJ). In 2017 Ukraine by special Request asked the ICJ to indicate the provisional measures for this case, including suspending restrictions on Ukrainian language education and respecting ethnic Ukrainian language and educational rights, while this case is pending, and ICJ unanimously demanded by special Order to Russia to ensure the availability of education in the Ukrainian language in Crimea<sup>2</sup>. This Order was not executed by Russia as till now there is only the imitation of the education in the Ukrainian language on peninsula.

In Memorial, submitted by Ukraine in this case in 2018, there was pointed that Russia has abused its position as an occupying power to promote its own culture, while choking off the means available to the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian communities to preserve their own separate identities, whether through cultural gatherings or otherwise. The desired end result is as transparent as it is abhorrent to the multi-

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=crh>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/166/166-20170419-ORD-01-00-EN.pdf>

ethnic heritage of Crimea: the cultural erasure of the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian communities on the peninsula. In Memorial it was pointed that Russia applies to Crimea a battery of repressive laws that are used selectively to deny the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian communities equal enjoyment of their human rights, and by this Russia establish collective punishment Crimean Tatars and Ukrainian that do not support the occupation and the attempt of annexation the Crimea<sup>3</sup>. And on 8<sup>th</sup> November of 2019 ICJ rejected the Russian preliminary objections in this case, as in part of jurisdiction, so in part of admissibility<sup>4</sup>. We expect the fair decision of the ICJ in this case, including issues of suppressing Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar language education as a tool of racial discrimination in modern Crimea, illegally occupied by Russia.

We demand from Russia to stop immediately the racial discrimination the Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in Crimea, including suppressing Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages in areas of education, culture, science, commerce and media, to execute the ICJ Order, 2017 and ensure the fair, practical, non-discriminative and transparent availability of education in the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian languages in Crimea;

We require Ukraine to make additional steps supporting the Crimean Tatar language as the language of indigenous people, on the mainland of Ukraine, including preserving high pedagogic education for teachers, supporting Crimean Tatar media, school education and culture.

We propose the international bodies, governments of other countries and non-governmental organisations to provide for Ukraine and for the Mejlis of Crimean Tatar People the technic and other aid for supporting the Crimean Tatar indigenous language, to demand from Russia to execute the ICJ Order and to stop the racial discrimination the Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars in Crimea, including ensuring the fair, practical, non-discriminative and transparent availability of education in the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian languages.

We inform all whom it concerns that our Centre organised in 2019 qualified translation the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights to the Crimean Tatar indigenous language and this translation is available on UN web-source; that we will do in future all possible for defence the indigenous Crimean Tatar language and relevant linguistic collective and individual rights of Crimean Tatars, including further translation the international human rights legal texts to this language.

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