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Unfortunately, in the modern world, concepts such as integration and equality have not been applied universally.

Taking as an example my own community – the Meskhetian Turks who are spread across 9 different countries, with different cultures, languages and political systems – it is outrageous that it is only in their historical homeland, in Georgia, that the Meskhetian Turks have been regarded as undesirables and that the concepts mentioned above have had no effect.

I remind you that the Meskhetian Turks are a native people of the southern regions of Georgia who were forcibly deported to the republics of Central Asia by the USSR under the Stalinist regime during the Second World War and who to this day are still denied the possibility of a dignified return to their traditional homelands.

Legal mechanisms adopted by Georgia in 2007, under pressure from the EU, regarding the repatriation of peoples who had been deported from the territory of Georgia were, it was asserted, based on fundamental principles such as: equality, non-discrimination and assistance with integration into society. In practice, these mechanisms were a complete failure: not a single deported person or a descendant of a deported person received Georgian citizenship and was able to return, and those who were able to return, despite the conditions promised and only under their own steam, are experiencing enormous difficulties in terms of legalisation and, consequently, in terms of socio-economic integration into Georgian society.

Unfortunately, the Georgian authorities continue to do everything they can to undermine any and all communication with activists and leaders of Meskhetian Turk societies, refusing them entry into Georgia and failing to respond to our appeals and the recommendations of international organisations.

The government of Georgia must fulfil the obligations it has assumed to conduct the repatriation of deported peoples, taking into account carefully considered, real procedures and the conditions of return, and taking the necessary legal measures to rehabilitate peoples who were illegally deported from the territory of Georgia.