



## UKRAINIANS AND CRIMEAN TATARS: RELATIONS AND INTERACTION IN HISTORY AND NOWADAYS: CRIMEAN TATAR VIEW

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Received Date: 04.11.2022 Revised Date: 02.01.2023 Accepted Date:06.01.2023

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### ABSTRACT

In present time the Crimean peninsula is regarded as a part of Ukrainian state. It is recognized by the International community and is supported by the decisions of general assembly of organization of United Nations. However it is very well known that Crimea or Crimean peninsula is a part of historically existed state of Crimean Tatar people, which was named Crimean Khanate and had relations with all neighboring states, like Ottoman Empire, Russian Empire, Poland, Hungary, France, Great Britain etc. Crimean Tatars in present time are the indigenous people of Crimean peninsula and even at the first part of 20th century until the en masse deportation in 1944 they had their own statehood which was named Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic which geographically was the same like today's Crimean peninsula. The statehood at that time was a part of so called Russian Soviet Federative Soviet Socialist Republic. After the deportation of Crimean Tatars while they were held in special settlements which were the close to the or similar to the regime to concentration camps, in 1954 Crimean peninsula was transferred from Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. Many people in different international organizations don't know about historical relations between Crimean Tatar people and their state Crimean Khanate and Ukraine. The description of this history is described below.

**Keywords:** Crimean Tatar people in Ukraine, Crimean Tatars and Ukraine, The right of Crimean Tatar people to self determination, The perspectives of Crimean Tatar in Ukraine, The history of relations between Crimea and Ukraine, The history of relations between Crimean Tatars and Ukraine, The history of relations between Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians, Crimean Tatars and their future, Crimean Tatars as indigenous people of Crimea and Ukraine, the rights of Crimean Tatar people

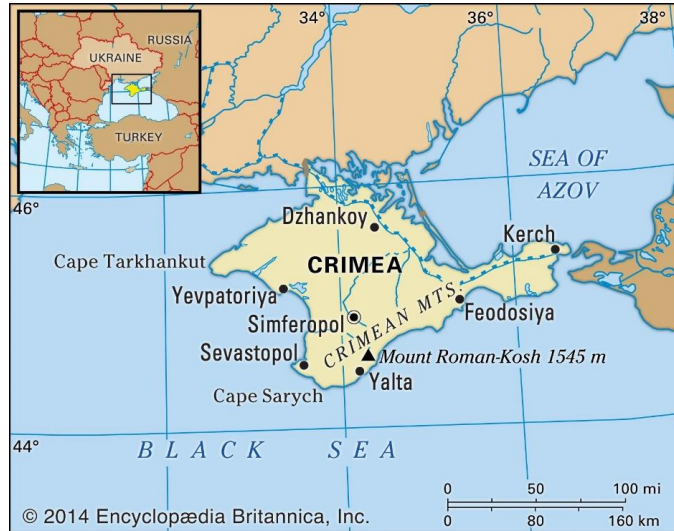
### Conceptual Framework

Crimean Tatars historically were the East-Southern neighbors of Ukraine and Ukrainians during centuries. Before the appearance of "Ukrainians" and "Crimean Tatars" on the historical arena as separate ethnoses the same situation was being existing during centuries between our and their ancestors on the same territories. Nomads of Eastern Europe and the settled populations of the Mountain and Southern Coast of the Crimean Peninsula were neighboring with settled farmers or peasants placed on the right coast of Dnipro River. Its territory was included into the boundaries of the empire. There were time by time military clashes as between ancestors of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars as it was typical for ancient and medieval times however those periods had changed with the decades of peaceful coexistence and never led to the land grab or the coercive subordination of one people to another.



## UKRAINIANS AND CRIMEAN TATARS: RELATIONS AND INTERACTION IN HISTORY AND NOWADAYS: CRIMEAN TATAR VIEW

Our national Kingship Crimean Khanate had been destroyed, annihilated and annexed by Czarist Russian Empire only in 1783.



It is important to take into account that Crimean Khanate right before Russian annexation covered not only Crimean Peninsula but was spread over the Northern Caucasus region till Dagestan (i.e. included Rostov oblast, Krasnodar and Stavropol krays of contemporary Russia), till the Northern boundary of contemporary Ukraine in Donetsk oblast (i.e. Donetsk, Lugansk, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolayiv, Kherson oblasts of contemporary Ukraine), and till Romanian boundary of contemporary Ukraine to the West (contemporary Odessa oblast, old name of the city Adzhy-bey). It may be stated that present Russian-Ukrainian War is going mostly on the and for the territories that historically belonged to Crimean Khanate.



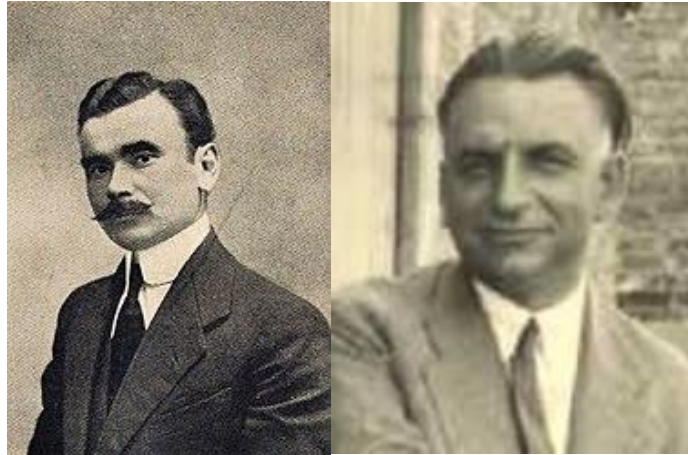


Remarkable point is that Ukraine lost its independence 129 years earlier than Crimean Tatars i.e. in 1654, when Ukrainian leaders voluntarily voted for so called Pereyaslav's Treaty, which announced the union between Russia and Ukraine. This is interesting fact, that some groups of Ukrainian Cossacks, who did not agree with that decision escaped to the territory of Crimean Khanate (Caucasian part) and were protected against Russia by our state. However, the territories of our Crimean Khanate were being shorten because of several centuries of Russian military invasions, raids and cutting the territory off. Russia was violently moving frontier from North and East, consequently reducing our land. Originally, the approximate territory of Crimean Tatars spread from Volga River up to contemporary Romania frontier, but by the annexation, it included the Crimean Peninsula and some neighboring areas of contemporary Ukraine, which nowadays have names of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya, Nikolayev, Odessa and Kherson oblasts of Ukraine.

Ukrainians partially took part in this conquest and destruction of Crimean Khanate as an auxiliary part of Russian troops.

Before today's Donetsk, Zaporizhzhya, Mykolaiyv, Odessa and Kherson oblasts had become a part of Ukraine, Russian troops implemented ethnic cleansing of Crimean Tatars on those territories. Later on they were populated by mixed Russian and Ukrainian settlers, who were mostly serfs from inner provinces of the Russian Empire and Ukraine. Because of that, hundreds of thousands of Crimean Tatars escaped to the territory of Ottoman Empire. The number of Crimean Tatar people on their native territory right after annexation decreased several times by two reasons: there was a mass extermination of the people both on the peninsula and Caucasian part (later Caucasian territories were populated by the Ukrainian Cossacks who were loyal to Russia and now known as Kuban Cossacks living in Krasnodar and Stavropol krays). Those, who survived escaped to the Ottoman Empire. This is an explanation, why nowadays there are millions of Turks of the Crimean Tatar origin, while in Crimea we number less, than 300 000 people. Slowly, step by step Northern and Eastern (in present time this is named as Krasnodarskiy Kray and Stavropolskiy Kray of the Russian Federation) parts of our native land on the Crimean Peninsula had become populated by Russian-Ukrainian mixed population and Crimean Tatars turned into minority that remained only on the Crimean Peninsula.

After the Czarist Russia collapsed in 1917, Crimean Tatars had attempted to restore their statehood. To do so, we established our Kurultay (National Congress) in December of 1917. In order to find mutual understanding with Ukrainians, the delegation of Kurultay went to Kyiv and held negotiations with the leaders of newly proclaimed Ukrainian People's Republic. Occasionally, they saw the map of the future Ukrainian Republic, where the northern part of the Crimean Peninsula was marked as Ukraine. It produced a long and difficult discussion between the Crimean Tatar delegation and the Ukrainian leadership. Finally, they agreed that all territories of historical Crimea would be a part of Ukraine; however, the Crimean Peninsula would become a State of the Crimean Tatars. The same time Crimean Tatar leaders (Noman Chelebidzhihan, Dzhafer Seidamet and others) tried to find a solution with the Russian majority of Crimea because due to the events of XXVIII-XIX c.c. to that moment Indigenous People of Crimea represented only 30% of total population of the Crimean Peninsula. They partially achieved a certain progress: a part of local Russian politicians including even the part of military officers agreed to look for compromise of establishing Crimean People's Republic, in which the special provisions would guarantee the equal rights both for the Crimean Tatars and the Slavic majority (Russians and Ukrainians, who all together numbered more that 50% of the Crimean population at that time).



**Noman Chelebidzhihan      Dzhafer Seidamet**

**Leaders of the First Kurultay and Crimean Democratic Republic 1917-1918**

As they had agreed earlier with the Ukrainian leadership, the territory of this State would cover the geographic territory of the Crimean Peninsula.

Later the Ukrainian People's Republic was defeated by the invasion of Communist Red Army from Russia (the events were very similar to the nowadays ones). In January of 1918 the military attack from Sevastopol (the Russian military navy base at the Western Coast of Crimea) was undertaken by Bolsheviks, who were supported by the majority of Russian-Ukrainian settlers in Crimea. The Crimean People's Republic was destroyed. Its small army consisted of Crimean Tatar soldiers and Russian former Czarist officers armed with light guns that afterwards was defeated by the Black Sea Navy corps armed by armored train canons and machine guns. Many of the Crimean Tatar leaders were arrested, tortured and killed. The group of Bolshevik Commissioners sent to Crimea from Russia declared that Crimea had to become the Socialist Republic of Tavrida. The Government of this Communist Republic was dispatched to Crimea from Petersburg; they chiefly ignored all the rights of the Crimean Tatars. The social base for this republic was Russian-Ukrainian mixed population, descendants of the settlers, who came to Crimea in XIX-XX centuries.

When the Civil War in Russia finished and the so-called Soviet Union was established, the central Communist Government created the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. It was included into Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic as its autonomous entity. Simultaneously the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic was settled on the territory of the contemporary Ukraine. Unlike autonomous republics, formed as only autonomous Russia's entities, the so called Union Republics were formally considered to be Sovereign States although they were not indeed.

Despite all repressiveness of communist regime and hypocrisy of their national policy, the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic became a kind of compromise between the aspirations of the Crimean Tatar people for self-determination, the restoration of their political, economic, cultural rights and communist game trying to present their national policy as an example for the colonial peoples. It was not a real free kind of self-determination, on the contrary, it was under hard control of Ministry of Interior and other special services, nevertheless the obvious progress took place within its framework. The Crimean Tatars received back a part of land expropriated in Czarist period; schools and Universities in Crimean Tatar language were created, the Crimean Tatar language became one of state languages (together with Russian) etc.



In accordance with archive data there were: 386 secondary, 475 incomplete secondary and elementary schools with the Crimean Tatar language of instruction in 1936 and 371 schools in 1941, 2 pedagogical technical colleges, language and literature institutions, 1511 voluntary and schools, 112 private libraries, 640 elementary and 221 primary school libraries, 200 libraries in collective farms, 30 district and 60 city libraries, 360 reading rooms in villages of Crimea, 263 clubs. About 40 000 Crimean Tatar pupils had education in their Mother Tongue at all levels of educational institutions.

On the one hand, the Crimean Tatar language along with the Russian was entitled the status of the state language. This rule was implemented on all levels of public life: legislation, court procedures, and education, post services, geographical names and directions, personal and public documentation and procedures, trade and business, etc.

On the other hand, however, NKVD (soviet intelligence service like KGB or FSB nowadays) shoot hundreds of Crimean Tatar intellectuals, public activists, elders, priests (mullas and imams) and even state officials (including the Chairman of the Crimean Republican Parliament Veli Ibragimov). During that period the Russian Communist Government promoted the replacement of Crimean Tatars by a new wave of settlers from inner Russia under different predicts (as mass public constructions, arrangement of collective and governmental farms etc.). Alongside tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars were exiled from Crimean under accusation to be counterrevolutionary actors etc. In 1920-1921 the artificial starvation in Crimea was prepared by the Central Russian Government by taking away grain stocks, including seeds, banning fishing and exporting food to inland Russia.



**Veli Ibragimov, the Head of the Central Executive Committee of the Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (Crimean Parliament of that period) 1921-1928.**

Nobody had exact figures of the victims of repressions in Crimea at that period but analytical approach demonstrates probable numbers that are more than 100 000 people.

The grave population losses of the Crimean Tatars at that period were partially compensated by high level of birth. An average family usually had 5-8 children. The demographic growths of the Crimean Tatars partially compensated those who were sentenced to exile, imprisonment or murder under political motives. The Soviet authorities tried to decrease consequently the proportion of the Indigenous People on our land by bringing new groups of Russians to Crimea purposefully and artificially changing the ethnic environment of the peninsula under excuse of implementing infrastructural projects, military and administrative needs, providing with experts etc.



Here is the table of ethnic composition of the Crimean Peninsula at different periods:

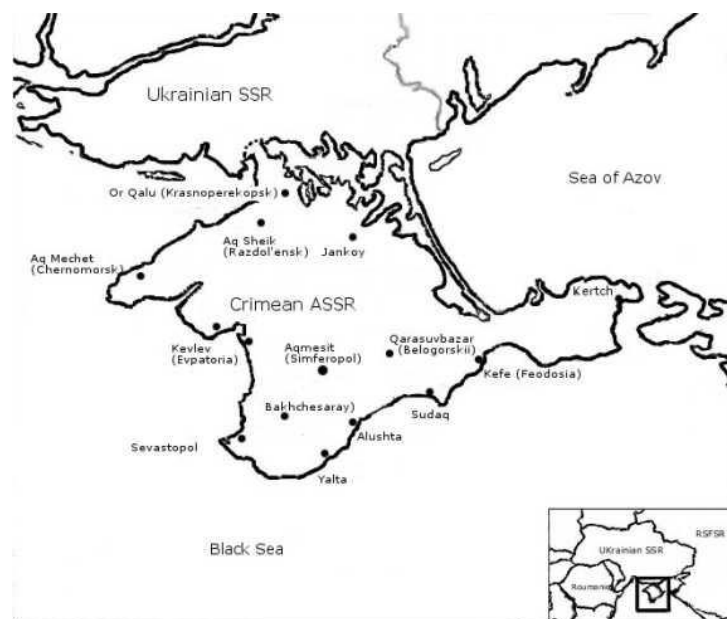
Year	Number of the entire population of Crimea	Percentage of different ethnic groups
1917	749,800 people	41.2% Russian, 28.7% Crimean Tatars, 8.6% Ukrainians, 6.4% Jews, 4.9% Germans, 2.9% Greeks, 1.6% Armenians, 1.4% Bulgarians, 0.8% Polish, 0.7% Turkish
1920	718 900 people	49.6% of Russians 19.4% of Crimean Tatars, 13.7% of Ukrainians, 5.8% of Jews, 4.5% of Germans, 1.8% of Greeks, 1.4% of Bulgarians, 1.1% of Armenians, 0.5% of Polish
1939	1 123 800	44.1% of Russians, 26% of the Crimean Tatars, 7.4% of Ukrainians, 6.7% of Jews, 5.9% of Germans, 3.3% of Greeks,



		1.7% of Armenians, 1.5% of Bulgarians, 0.8% of Karaites, 0.8% of Polish
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At that period, Ukraine was only a neighboring Union Republic situated to the north of Crimea, where similar processes took place.

On May 18 of 1944 the Soviet Government using the predict that Crimea was being under Nazi's occupation for 3 years totally and forcibly deported those Crimean Tatars who still lived in Crimea to Central Asia, inner Russia of near Ural region and Siberia. It was not even comparable with Japanese internment in the USA or Canada at the time of WWII. The families, whose men were mostly drafted into the Soviet Army and had been fighting against Nazis in the battlefields, were woken up by the special operations force of the Russian Ministry of Interior at 4 a.m. There were allowed only 15 minutes to collect their personal belongings and by the end of the day they were “loaded” into cattle train wagons without food, medication and water. Thus, they were sent to exile. The way took several weeks. After Crimean Tatars reached the places of exile, they were distributed in special settlements that represented a kind of slave villages under special military service control. Families were divided, the people was used in the very hardest and the most harmful sorts of work. During the process of replacement and during the first 3 years, more than 46% of the people died of diseases, inhuman treatment and starvation.



**The map of Crimean Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic**

Even the WWII veterans awarded for military merits were sent there. Some of them found their families completely dead. All private property of Crimean Tatars remained in Crimea: land plots, houses (more than 87 000), some of the cattle, sheep, even clothes, everyday objects, stocks of food and even underwear was looted. Thousands of articles of cultural values were plundered, destroyed, or expropriated by the state bodies or non-Indigenous neighbors. The same happened to the property of the collective farms, created on the base of shares of the Crimean Tatars and industrial plants.



All of the real estate and personal objects were partially recorded into special registers and later distributed free among the next wave of new-settlers, who mostly were Russians and Ukrainians, artificially and intentionally recruited in various parts of Russia and Ukraine. They were brought and placed to the former Crimean Tatar villages and settlements. The name of these settlements were totally renamed into Russian and Ukrainian manner. The Ukrainian consisted about 20% of those settlers, what was regulated by special decisions of Soviet Government.

In 1946, Crimean Soviet Socialist Republic simultaneously with Chechen-Ingush Soviet Socialist Republic was officially abolished. Crimea was declared to be an ordinary Russian oblast (province or district).

Until the 1956, all Crimean Tatars were forcibly kept in special settlements that were dispersed throughout the territories of several regions hundreds and thousands kilometers away from each other. With no schools, no language, no communications between the settlements. It was legally declared, that the regime of special settlements had been established for all Crimean Tatars, their children and their descendants forever. Every Crimean Tatar person was obliged to go to special commandant to affirm that he was or she was present in that place. The official provision of the Criminal Code applied punishment of 25 years of hard labor for any attempt to escape from those settlements.

Even the death of Stalin had not changed the situation.

Under those circumstances, 23 of February 1954, the Central Soviet Government approved the transfer of the Crimean oblast from Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic under jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. This decision was preliminary approved by both Russian and Ukrainian government.

The legal procedure was as follows. On February 5, 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic made decision to transfer the Crimean Oblast to Ukrainian SSR. On February 19, 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic adopted that proposal made by Russia by its own Decision using the following wording: "The Presidium of the Supreme Council of Ukrainian SSR expresses cordial acknowledgement of thanks to the Presidium of the Supreme Council of Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic for this magnanimous noble act of the brotherly Russian People.

The Ukrainian People full of satisfaction and gratitude met the decision of integrating Crimea into the territory of the Ukrainian SSR as a new bright manifestation of the endless confidence and sincere love between Russian People to Ukrainian People, a new evidence of the indissoluble brotherly friendship between Russian and Ukrainian peoples". On February 19, 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR approved this transfer by its own Resolution.

**“The official motives of this political decision must be particularly pointed out. In 1954 the Pereyaslav’s Treaty marked 300 years, when Ukraine voluntarily rejected its independence and became part of the Russian Empire.”**

In the recent decades, a lot of discussion arouse concerning the legality of that transfer. The Russians mostly insisted on the fact that nobody asked the Crimean Population (they prefer to say Crimean People) about the change of jurisdiction of Crimea. However, they preferred to keep silence that these populations were not someone else than the newcomers who settled in Crimea just 150 years ago without any consent of the Crimean Tatar people. They occupied our houses, our lands and were illegally using our property. The Ukrainians very often put forward an argument, that Crimea of that period was in a very adverse situation due to the fact, that those newcomers had no experience to deal with the traditional economy, such as fruit and





vegetable gardens, vineyards and vine-production, domestic animals, tobacco plantations etc. that were historically cultivated and administered by the Crimean Tatars. The Ukrainian authorities stated that it was vitally necessary to populate Crimea with the people from southern regions (i.e. Ukrainians) in order to revive the Crimean economy and enrich the Soviet economy, explaining that, unlike Russians, the Ukrainians had more capacity to manage this kind of agriculture.

**NO ONE OF THEM EVEN MENTIONES:**

**THAT CRIMEAN TATARS WERE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE AND HAD A SHEER AND TRADITIONAL RIGHT TO OWN AND ADMINISTER THE LAND OF CRIMEA AS ITS ONLY INDIGENOUS PEOPLE! AND NONE OF THE STATES IS ENTITLED TO ANY RIGHT OF ADMINISTRATING CRIMEA WITHOUT FREE AND PRIOR CONSENT AND PARTICIPATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATAR PEOPLE LET IT BE IN THE PAST, AT PRESENT OR IN THE FUTURE!**

**ANY STATE PRETENDING TO HAVE CRIMEA UNDER ITS JURISDICTION MUST OBTAIN PREVIOUS AGREEMENT ON THIS ISSUE FROM THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE!**

**THAT AGREEMENT MUST INCLUDE PROVISIONS GUARANTEEING THE RIGHTS OF CRIMEAN TATAR PEOPLE IN ACCORDANCE WITH MINIMAL INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS RELATED TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES I.E. UN DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES!**

**NOBODY OF THEM AS A LEAST ONCE SAY THAT ALL INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TOTALLY WAS KEPT IN A KIND OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN THAT MOMENT AND HAD NO CHANCE TO EXPRESS THEIR OPINION ON THE ISSUE!**

**BOTH SIDES WERE AND ARE TO AGREE THAT CRIMEAN TATARS WAS NOT THAT PEOPLE, WHO WAS TO BE ASKED FIRST OF ALL AND, WHO WAS TO BE PRIMARILY RETURNED TO THEIR MOTHERLAND BEFORE ANY DECISION RELATED TO CRIMEA HAD BEEN MADE!**

**CRIMEAN TATARS WERE RELEASED FROM SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS ONLY IN APRIL 1956 E.I. 3 YEARS AFTER THE EVENT AND THE SAME DECREE PROVISION STATED THAT RELEASING DIDN'T MEAN THE RIGHT TO COME BACK TO CRIMEA AND TO CLAIM BACK THEIR PROPERTY!**

It would take too much time to describe the mass struggle of Crimean Tatars for the return to their Motherland. Those one, who are interested, may read the next sources, which are accessible on the Internet:

1. Aleksandr M. Nekrich. Punished Peoples Paperback – November 17, 1981

<https://www.amazon.com/Punished-Peoples-Aleksandr-M-Nekrich/dp/0393000680>

2. "PUNISHED PEOPLES" OF THE SOVIET UNION

<https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/u/ussr/ussr.919/ussr919full.pdf>

3. SÜRGÜN: THE CRIMEAN TATARS' DEPORTATION AND EXILE

<https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/suerguen-crimean-tatars-deportation-and-exile.html>

4. Social Assessment of the Formerly Deported Population in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea: A Participatory Rapid Appraisal

<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/euroseries/42555e332/social-assessment-formerly-deported-population-autonomous-republic-crimea.html>



5. Parallel Report Prepared by the Foundation for Research and Support of the Indigenous Peoples of Crimea

<https://unpo.org/article/1752>

6. Evaluation of UNHCR's programme to prevent and reduce statelessness in Crimea, Ukraine <https://www.unhcr.org/405ab4c74.pdf>

7. Uehling, Greta L., Beyond Memory: The Crimean Tartars' Deportation and Return (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)

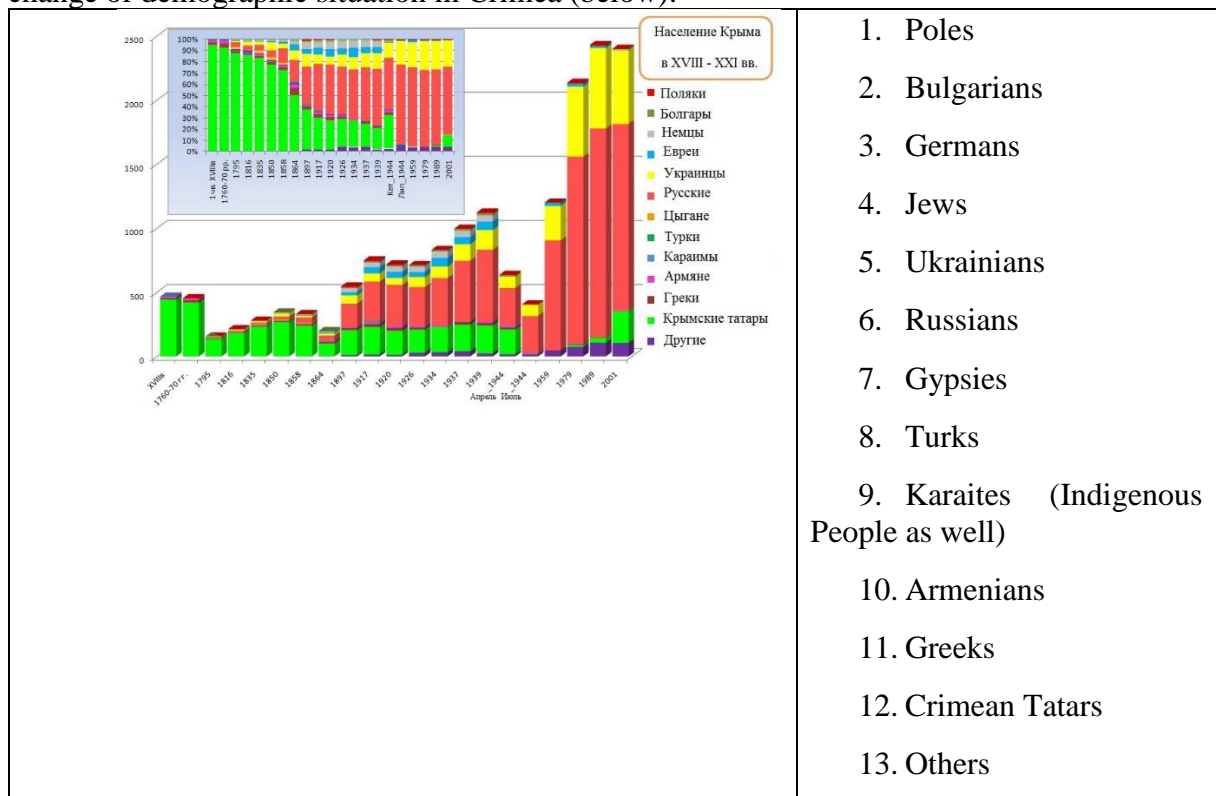
<https://www.ssrc.org/publications/beyond-memory-the-crimean-tartars-deportation-and-return/>

8. Uehling, Greta (2015) "Genocide's Aftermath: Neostalinism in Contemporary Crimea," Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal: Vol. 9: Iss. 1: 3-17 <https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol9/iss1/4/>

The Google search for Crimean Tatars may provide with very big scope of additional reading on the theme.

A real opportunity to come back to Crimea appeared only in the late 1980s, while central Soviet authorities obviously weakened their power at the noon of collapse of the Soviet Union. In that time, Soviet Union Republics began to try to secede from the USSR. Ukraine did the same thing. So mass returning of Crimean Tatars started approximately in 1988 and mostly finished in 1996-1998. It began, when Ukraine was part of the USSR, and decreased, when Ukraine became internationally recognized independent state.

The consequences of the policy of oppression, genocide and ethnocide in Crimea undertaken by Czarist and following regimes may be illustrated by the table reflecting the change of demographic situation in Crimea (below):





### **Chronicle of Changes in the Ethnic Composition of the Population of the Crimean Peninsula from the 18th Century to the Present**

1795 - 156,400 people (87.6% Crimean Tatars, 4.3% Russians, 1.9% Greeks, 1.7% Roma, 1.5% Karaites, 1.3% Ukrainians, 0.8% Jews, 0.6% Armenians, 0.1% Germans, 0.1% Bulgarians)

1816 - 212 600 people (85.9% of the Crimean Tatars, 4.8% of the Russians, 3.7% of the Ukrainians, 1.4% of the Karaites, 1.3% of the Armenians, 0.9% of the Jews, 0.8% of the Greeks, 0.7% of the Germans, 0.4% of the Bulgarians)

1835 - 279 400 people (83.5% Crimean Tatars, 4.4% Russians, 3.1% Ukrainians, 2.4% Roma, 2% Greeks, 1.5% Armenians, 1.1% Karaites, 0.9% Jews, 0.7% Germans, 0.4% Bulgarians)

1850 - 343 500 people (77.8% of the Crimean Tatars, 7% of the Ukrainians, 6% of the Russians, 2% of the Greeks, 1.9% of the Roma, 1.3% of the Karaites, 1% of the Armenians, 1% of the Germans, 0.9% of the Jews, 0.5% of the Bulgarians)

1858 - 331,300 people (73% Crimean Tatars, 12.6% of Russians, 4% of Ukrainians, 2.4% of Greeks, 2% of Roma, 1.8% of Jews, 1.5% of Germans, 1.3% of Armenians, 0.8% of Karaites, 0.6% of Bulgarians)

1864 - 198 700 people (50.3% Crimean Tatars, 28.5% of Russians and Ukrainians, 6.5% Greeks, 5.3% Jews, 2.9% Armenians, 2.7% Germans, 1.7% Karaites, 1.6% Bulgarians)

1897 - 546,700 people (35.6% Crimean Tatars, 33.1% Russians, 11.8% Ukrainians, 5.8% Germans, 4.4% Jews, 3.1% Greeks, 1.5% Armenians, 1.3% Bulgarians, 1.2% Poles, 0.3% Turks)

1917 - 749,800 people (41.2% Russian, 28.7% Crimean Tatars, 8.6% Ukrainians, 6.4% Jews, 4.9% Germans, 2.9% Greeks, 1.6% Armenians, 1.4% Bulgarians, 0.8% Poles, 0.7% Turks)

1920 - 718 900 people (44.1% of Russians, 26% of the Crimean Tatars, 7.4% of Ukrainians, 6.7% of Jews, 5.9% of Germans, 3.3% of Greeks, 1.7% of Armenians, 1.5% of Bulgarians, 0.8% of Karaites, 0.8% of Poles)

1926 - 706,800 people (42.7% Russians, 25.3% Crimean Tatars, 11.0% Ukrainians, 6.2% Germans, 5.5% Jews, 2.4% Greeks, 1.5% Armenians, 1.6% Bulgarians, 0.6% Karaites, 0.6% Poles, 0.9% Crimeans)

1934 - 832,000 people (44% Russians, 23.8% Crimean Tatars, 10.9% Ukrainians, 8.1% Jews, 6.1% Germans, 1.7% Armenians, 1.4% Bulgarians)

1937 - 996 800 persons (47,7% of Russians, 20,7% of the Crimean Tatars, 12,9% of Ukrainians, 5,5% of the Jews, 5,1% of the Germans, 2,2% of the Greeks, 1,5% of the Bulgarians, 0,3% of the Karaites)

1939. 1 123 800 (49.6% of Russians, 19.4% of Crimean Tatars, 13.7% of Ukrainians, 5.8% of Jews, 4.5% of Germans, 1.8% of Greeks, 1.4% of Bulgarians, 1.1% of Armenians, 0.5% of Poles)<sup>1</sup>

**1944 (END OF SUMMER) - 379,000 PEOPLE (75% RUSSIANS, 21% UKRAINIANS)**

1959 - 1,201,500 people (71.4% Russians, 22.3% Ukrainians, 2.2% Jews, 0.1% Poles)

1979 - 2 135 900 people (68,4% Russians, 25,6% Ukrainians, 1,1% Jews, 0,7% Crimean Tatars, 0,3% Poles, 0,2% Armenians, 0,2% Greeks)

1989 - 2,430,500 people (67.1% Russians, 25.8% Ukrainians, 1.6% of the Crimean Tatars, 0.7% of the Jews, 0.3% of the Poles, 0.1% of the Greeks).



**All-Ukrainian census of 2001 has given those figures:**

2001 - without the city of Sevastopol. Sevastopol - 2,024,056 people (**58.3% Russians, 24.3% Ukrainians, 12.1% Crimean Tatars**, 1.4% Belarusians, 0.5% Tatars, 0.4% Armenians, 0.2% each Jews, Poles, Moldovans, Azerbaijanis, 0.1% each of Uzbeks, Koreans, Greeks, Germans, Mordovians, Chuvashs, Roma, Bulgarians, Georgians, and Maris, as well as **Karaites**, Crimeans, Italians, and others).

**Regional Census 2014 on the Territory of the Crimean Federal District**

**Conducted by the Russian government has given those figures:**

Russians – 1492078 (67,90%), Ukrainians - 344515 (15,68%), Crimean Tatars – 232340 (10,57%).

However, since the establishment of Russian Rule in Crimea in 2014 about 600 000 migrants from inner Russia (mostly ethnic Russian) were brought or settled in Crimea with Russian Government's support. So, at the present time: Russians are about 2 092 078 or 75.6%, Ukrainians 12.4%, Crimean Tatars – 8.4%. In fact, the proportion of Crimean Tatars should be lower because during of period of occupation the number of Indigenous persons and families were leaving Crimea due to the Russian persecutions and oppressions.

Since the very beginning of their return, practically all Crimean Tatars were the supporters of the Ukrainian independence, because the Soviet regime inflicted harm and caused too many horrible actions in relation to our people. The same time, Crimean Tatars mostly had a very great level of distrust towards Russia due to our historical painful experiences as well as towards the policy of “new” Russia that ill-treated their own Indigenous Peoples including Chechen wars etc.

However Ukrainian Government and unfortunately a great part of the Ukrainian public including those activists, experts, NGOs, mass-medias, who were supposed to be so called democrats dreamt about Ukrainian independence mostly met the returning of Crimean Tatars as a challenge and non-desirable factor threatening to the sovereignty of Ukraine and the stability of the Ukrainian power and jurisdiction in Crimea. They preferred to have a dialog with the local authorities and pro-Russian organizations of Crimea, being afraid that support to the Crimean Tatars return provokes Russian majority to separatism and from another side being completely sure that Crimean Tatars are going to cut Crimea from Ukraine (and even more idiotic variant - to join Turkey after they would have previously killed all Russians and Ukrainians in Crimea). It was Ukrainian Government, who allowed to conduct a so called referendum on restoration of Autonomous Republic of Crimea on January 18 of 1991.

Crimean Tatars boycotted this referendum, because its official aim was to restore Crimean Autonomous Republic but as statehood of the so called People of Crimea. Conceptually so called “People of Crimea” was supposed to be newborn territorial political entity on the peninsula having its right to self-determination realizing it through their voting and establishing that Republic of Crimea (lately it was transformed into the Autonomous Republic of Crimea by Ukrainian Law and Constitution and more later again turned back into Republic of Crimea by Russian Law and Constitution as a part of Russian Federation) where the Crimean Tatars are small and paltry minority of voters, who may pretend to something but majority's will put everything in its place. Crimean Tatars for that moment consisted only 5% of whole population of Crimea.

In fact, everybody and the first of all Ukrainian authorities clearly understood that this is a new official statehood of Russian-Ukrainian Slavic majority, where the Russians play a role of senior and the Ukrainians of junior partners in their common game against any claims of the Crimean Tatars to be recognized and in a capacity of Indigenous People with his inherent rights. The Crimean Tatars protested decisively, nevertheless Ukrainian State, regarding the Russian



majority as an allagaintst Turkish-Tatar threat was glad so much, thinking that the creation and improvement of formally territorial but in fact Russian Republic in Crimea is a final resolution of the Crimean Tatar problem for Ukraine. The Ukrainian state leadership considered this political trick as a successful solution of the problem of self-determination, which Crimean Tatar People demanded decisively.

The People of Crimea i.e. mixed Slavic population of any territory on any separate part of Ukraine had caused precedent. By this way, the central Ukrainian Government recognized any territorial community as a political subject of the right to self-determination, which opened the door for the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic's and to the Crimean referendum of March 18 of 1991, which declared the Independence of Crimea from Ukraine. Three days later Republic of Crimea asked the Russian Government to enter Russian Federation. The request was approved and Republic of Crimea became the subject of Russian Federation.

Crimean Tatars boycotted that referendum again but, of course, it hadn't work. I.e. ignoring or even oppressing Crimean Tatars and their Indigenous Rights, the Ukrainian State had been building the road to the separation of Crimea and secession of other parts of Ukraine with its own hands.



Ukrainian State did everything possible maximally to complicate returning and re-settlement of Indigenous People to their Homeland. Trying time by time to oppress manifestations and action of squatting of the land by Crimean Tatars, which were made to do it because the local and Ukrainian authorities were not letting receive land plots for house construction in a legal way, using special forces, police troops and even National Guard to punish Crimean Tatar's protests. It's enough to state that **among 300 newly constructed Crimean Tatar settlements ONLY ONE (1)** was built after official permission of the authorities (I am to stress --Ukrainian ones). The remained 299 ones were legalized in 5-15 years after they have been arranged in fact. There were facts of kidnapping, tortures, even killings of some Crimean Tatars in Ukrainian periods.

Discussing this point in different International Agencies Ukrainian Government in order to demonstrate the complete welfare in Crimean Tatar's problem usually used two main arguments:

1. It allocated sums form State Budget since 1992 for construction and re-settlement of so called formerly deported peoples. These monies were used without any control of Crimean Tatars and since the beginning became the object of total corruption and despoliation. It's necessary to point out that total volume of these moneys for all Ukrainian period consisting approximately 1.5 billion of Ukrainian hryvnia (18 750 mln USD) is less than withholding tax collected by Ukrainian Government from Crimean Tatars (13% of income from each).



2. During a long time, it continues to report that there in Crimea were not interethnic clashes unlike in Transdnistria, Caucasus or Central Asia, which should to demonstrate deep wisdom of Ukrainian Policy towards Crimean Tatars. It was a lie. The lack of big scale interethnic conflicts in Crimea was explained by the traditions of Crimean Tatar National Movement, which exclusively used the methods of civil protests and disobedience carefully observing the principle of non-violence even in very hard situations, which regular were provoked or even arranged by local and central authorities. Time by time, when Ukrainian Government was disturbed it sent to Crimea not only additional police contingent but National Guard and Internal Troops for physical oppression of Crimean Tatars. This practice had a regular character. For instance, it had a place in June of 1995, March of 1998, November of 2004.

Finally, such approach to Crimean Tatars protests led to the birth and development of anti-Ukrainian Paramilitary Russian organizations (like so called Crimean Cossacks supported by Ukrainian Governments during decades hoping to turn them against Crimean Tatars if it will become necessary) and eruption of anti-Ukrainian Russian secessionism in February-March of 2014 immediately supported by Russian special troops, military Russian occupation of Crimea and declaration of joining Russia made by the local authorities, the same ones, which were arranged by Ukraine and in accordance with the Ukrainian Constitution and legislation.

The long time consequences are obvious now.

On the other hand, there was a long range of attempts to corrupt the self-consciousness and self-identification of Crimean Tatars as Indigenous People. The Ukrainian Government by various channels including some Human Rights NGOs, experts and sometimes openly proposed to Crimean Tatars to adopt the label of one of Ukrainian National Minorities and to live in this status in democratic prosperous multiethnic Crimea as a part of Ukraine.

The average level of the representatives of Crimean Tatars in the local state bodies of Crimea under Ukraine consisted about 4%, while at recent period Crimean Tatars consisted 13-14% of the Crimean population and their educational level was higher than of other sectors of population.

However, in July 1991 Crimean Tatar people called the second (after 1917) Kurultay and adopted the number of political declarations claimed his rights as an Indigenous People of Crimea, then Medzhlis of Crimean Tatar People (permanent representative and executive body) was elected and entire system of regional and local medzhlises was elected by local communities of Crimean Tatars. This unique system of self-management helped Crimean Tatars resist to different attempts of violent, political and legal oppressions, which were undertaken by local, mostly pro-Russian (and consisted mostly of ethnic Russians and partially of Ukrainians) and central Ukrainian authorities.

Due to fear in front of Indigenous Rights Ukrainian Government despite its desire to look like a progressive European State had not ratified the Roman Statute of International Criminal Court, what has reflected very bad to Ukraine later. The reason was, that “deportation” officially is recognized there as crime against humanity and in that case Ukraine had to undertake special measures to recognize and to restore by the Law the rights of Crimean Tatar People but it didn’t want to do it.

All property taken from Crimean Tatars at the moment of deportation was inherited by Ukraine from Russia in 1954. Nothing was returned or compensated. Vice versa in the process of privatization of the land and houses, which after plundering of Crimean Tatars legally stayed in the State property still) were hastily distributed after WWII Settlers and finally turned into



their private property. Not even mentioning the redress of land, which remained after the privatization of personal plots, was additionally given to new-settlers referring to the facts, that they were the members of the working collectives of the enterprises and farms arranged after the deportation of Crimean Tatars. The fact that Crimean Tatars forcibly were replaced from Crimea hadn't taken into account officially. As a result, the Crimean Tatars had got the land 3 times less for each person than citizens of Ukraine of other ethnic belonging. That was open racial discrimination in the spirit of apartheid, what didn't stop Ukrainian State from such behavior.

As for any Indigenous People the Crimean land for Crimean Tatars is not only a space for physical deployment and economic activity. It has a spiritual, blood relative and endless cultural meaning. Any small place, rock, cliff, spring, stone, grove, coastal bend has its own traditional name and history kept in the memory and the soul of the Crimean Tatars. Old Crimean Tatar houses, which do not match the tastes of Russians, Ukrainians or architectural fashion and trends, why they are regretless destroyed by new "legal" (by Ukrainian or Russian laws) owners hold the traces and memories of the generations of Crimean Tatars built them 200-300-500 years ago. There are hundreds of families of Crimean Tatars, whose houses and gardens around were torn down deliberately or by authorities in order to exterminate the very remind of presence of the Indigenous People in that place. Simultaneously it meant the annihilation of traditional knowledge and cultural expressions, generally said the cultural heritage of Crimean Tatar People. The same was with Crimean Tatar ancient cemeteries and mosques, which started under Soviet Power, continued under Ukraine and is still being continued under Russia. Practically 90% of all traditional toponymy was perverted by the replacement by Russian and Ukrainian names. This was and is the policy of ethnocide intentionally inflicting injuries to Crimean Tatar's dignity, self-consciousness and souls.

The same thing was a reason, why Ukraine abstained at the session of UH Human Rights Council in 2006 and session of UN GA in 2007, while Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was being voting.

One of the Prime-Ministers of Autonomous Republic of Crimea openly declared in his interview at 2006 that he had the instruction of President of Ukraine assimilate Crimean Tatars peacefully, what caused public resonance in Crimea.

Despite all these tricks of Ukrainian State and growing disappointment by its policy towards our people the absolute majority of Crimean Tatars was staying loyal citizens of Ukraine hoping that once the Ukrainian leadership will change its point of view. Crimean Tatars protested and demanded their right peacefully however never challenged territorial integrity or state sovereignty of Ukraine over Crimea.

Since 1994, tens of representatives of the Crimean Tatars took part in various international forums dealing with Human and People rights including those ones, which concern Indigenous Issues. Not once Crimean Tatar's NGOs presented their shadow reports and communications to the UN Treaty bodies, Special Rapporteurs, other procedures. Crimean Tatars undertook several petition campaigns addressed as to Ukrainian Government as to International organizations.

Sometimes the International Organizations worked very contradictive. For instance, OSCE by one hand played a big role in the process of simplification of the receiving of Ukrainian citizenship for formerly deportees by another one it many times and loudly declared that Crimean Tatars to be recognized and supported in the status of National Minority but not as a people, what was wonderful predict to deny our rights for Ukrainian Government. The same was with UNDP, which collected money and spent a lot of them not to the real needs of



Crimean Tatars but for self-sustaining, self-advertising and public undertakings of that character.

Under press of international public opinion and International agencies as UN HCR, UN HCHR, OSCE, CoE and their officials, Human Rights NGOs, Crimean Tatar diaspora abroad and publicity and support of Crimean Tatar case due to the brotherly assistance of International Indigenous Movement Ukrainian Government step by step began to go back from its preliminary position of principal non-recognition of the rights of Crimean Tatar People. For instance, in 2000 the special treaty was concluded with Uzbekistan, where to most of Crimean Tatars were deported in 1944, in order to simplify the procedure of receiving of Ukrainian citizenship, 15 Crimean Tatar senior schools were open in Crimea (for comparison before the deportation there were approximately 386 secondary Crimean Tatar schools) etc.

To be just there were among Ukrainians public activists and NGOs, who understood the situation adequately, however they were not more than thousands of the people all over the country and their help was morally very important but not really too much effective.

It was no accident that UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on its Seventy-ninth session 8 August-2 September 2011 in its Concluding Observations stated:

“16. The Committee notes with concern the absence of legislation on indigenous peoples implementing the guarantees to indigenous peoples and national minorities contained in articles 11 and 92 of the Constitution (art. 2 (2)).

**The Committee urges the State party to adopt legislation to protect indigenous peoples and guarantee their economic, cultural and social development, and to consider ratifying International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (1989).**

17. The Committee continues to be strongly concerned by information alleging difficulties experienced by Crimean Tatars who have returned to Ukraine, including lack of access to land, employment opportunities, insufficient possibilities for studying their mother tongue, hate speech against them, lack of political representation, and access to justice. The question of restitution and compensation for the loss of over 80,000 private dwellings and approximately 34,000 hectares of farmland upon deportation remains of serious concern, particularly as 86% of the Crimean Tatars living in rural areas did not have the right to participate in the process of agricultural land restitution as they had not worked for State enterprises. The Committee is also interested in following up the situation regarding the enjoyment of human rights by members of other ethnic groups deported in 1944 (art. 5 (b), (d) (v) and (e) (i), (iii) and (v)).

**The Committee recommends that the State party ensure the restoration of political, social and economic rights of Tatars in the Crimea, in particular the restitution of property including land or the compensation for its loss under the Civil Code, or through a special law to be adopted to that end. The Committee further recommends that the State party provide updated information in its next periodic report on the enjoyment of human rights by members of other formerly deported ethnic groups.**

18. The Committee also notes with concern various reports alleging that the communities of Krymchaks and Karaites are on the verge of extinction (art. 2 (2)).

**The Committee urges that the State party adopt as a matter of priority special measures to enable the preservation of the language, culture, religious specificities and traditions of Krymchaks and Karaites, in accordance with the Committee’s general recommendation No. 32 (2009) on the meaning and scope of special measures”.**

This approach has been imposing on Crimean Tatars till May of 2014. After the Russian invasion and occupation of Crimea in March of 2014. On March 20, 2014, 3 days after the





Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Crimea on the admission to the Russian Federation of the Republic of Crimea and the formation in the Russian Federation of new constituent entities was signed in Moscow between Russian and Crimean Governments, Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine adopted the Decree of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine On the Statement of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on Guaranteeing the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People within the Ukrainian State.

Two months later the Ukrainian Government made an official statement on the session of Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues about complete recognition of UNDRIP. Verkhovna Rada (Ukrainian Parliament) urgently approved the Resolution on the Recognition of Crimean Tatars, Karaimes, Krymchaks in a capacity of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea.

In June 2022 Ukrainian Parliament adopted and Ukrainian President signed the Law of Ukraine on the Status of Crimean People, which reflects many provisions of UNDRIP including the right to self-determination within Ukrainian State, self-government, some cultural, linguistic and even participation in the using of natural resources of Crimea rights.

It was accepted by the Crimean Tatars with great enthusiasm although the current situation gives no chance to implement this law yet.

Russian Federation through the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned this Law as racist and fascist because on its opinion the Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, Bulgarian etc. “peoples” of Ukraine are not mentioned in this Law, i.e. Russians intentionally confused classical national minorities having their “kinstates” with Indigenous Peoples trying to undermine the legal recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples of Crimea. The representatives of the Russian Federation during decades are taking part in the different UN meetings, dealing with Indigenous Issues so it is non-imaginable that Russian diplomats are not competent in this case. It was just a piece of ideological preparations to the present military operation.



The analysis above doesn't touch the problems relating to the current situation of the Crimean Tatars to be presented in a separate document.