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To UN Working Group on Discrimination against Women and Girls

Oppressions of Young Women's Activism in the Crimea

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Our Association of Reintegration of Crimea¹, as a registered non-governmental organisation, herewith submits the following responses (submission) to the questionnaire of the UN Working Group on Discrimination against women and girls, for the forthcoming report on the girls' and young women's activism for the 50th session of the UN Human Rights Council. Our responses are devoted to the situation of oppressions the young women's activism in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol (hereinafter – the Crimea). The response deals with the issues identified by the Association in its work, namely the issue of intentional and organised Russian policy of gender discrimination and elimination the fundamental freedoms in the Crimea.

The illegal occupation and attempted annexation of the Crimea by Russian Federation (hereinafter – RF) since 2014 have been condemned in a series of international acts, including UN GA resolutions 2014 68/262, 2016 71/205, 2017 72/190, 2018 73/263 2019 74/168, 2020 75/192, 2018 73/194, 2019 74/17, 2020 75/29², resolutions of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe 1988 (2014), 2028 (2015), 2067 (2015), 2112 (2016), 2132 (2016), 2145 (2017), 2198 (2018), 2231 (2018) etc., of the European Parliament's resolutions 2014/2841 (RSP), 2014/2965 (RSP), 2016/2556 (RSP), 2016/2692 (RSP), 2017/2596 (RSP), 2017/2869 (RSP), 2018/2754 (RSP), 2018/2870 (RSP), 2019/2734 (RSP), 2019/2202 (INI) etc. Those acts paid special attention to the brutal violation by the RF the fundamental rights including freedom of opinion and expression. Human rights violations in the Crimea, including oppression all forms of civil society and activism now are the subject to consideration in international courts, including the International Court of Justice (case 166)³ and the European Court of Human Rights (case 20958/14 and others).⁴

Association gives such information for the questions, pointed by the Working Group:

In the modern Crimea under full Russian control there is no possibility for young women to exercise their freedom of opinion and expression online and offline⁵. All independent journalists and bloggers in peninsula are under pressure, being arrested or fined by Russia's punitive bodies⁶. The main challenges in this area are the “extremism” countering and permanent hate speech of

¹ <https://arc.construction/>

² for example, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/263>

³ <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/166/166-20191108-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf>

⁴ <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-207622>

⁵ <https://arc.construction/15590>

⁶ <https://arc.construction/11966>

Russia's propaganda in the peninsula⁷. Key challenges in the Crimea appear for the young women who represent the indigenous Crimean Tatar people⁸, who have active social position⁹, for politic prisoners' family members¹⁰ and for the LGBT representatives¹¹.

Russian de-facto "authorities" ban any independent social activities in the Crimea, with participation of the young women, including the protests against the policy that caused water crisis in peninsula¹², against vaccination by the non-effective Russia-produced drugs¹³, against the limitation the crossing the boundary line with the Ukrainian mainland due to the "epidemic purposes"¹⁴. The case of the Ms. Ludvica Papadoupulu, blogger from Yalta city that was fined and persecuted by the Russia's punitive bodies in 2019-2020 for her posts in the social networks on the ecologic¹⁵, urbanization and anti-corruption issues¹⁶ is important as the Russia's "officers" used the gender discrimination against this blogger, insulted and blackmailed her exactly as woman¹⁷.

There is no any possibility for feminism movement in the modern Crimea, occupied by Russia, as the Russian state ideology have grounds on clerical and patriarchal roots and it has a strong part of populism and propaganda. So the feminist ideas and relevant young women activism are persecuted by the Russia's "officers" as "too dangerous and independent ones". And the modern phenomena of Crimean young women activism, journalism and women fight for their family members who are the politic prisoners is unacceptable for the Russian de-facto "authorities" in the peninsula¹⁸. And more, Russia-controlled media, bloggers¹⁹ and "independent organizations" abuse the freedom of expression in third countries²⁰ to justify the gender discrimination and oppressions the young women activism in the Crimea²¹.

Russian de-facto "authorities" do not provide any legislative, administrative, policy, regulatory or other measures in the Crimea to promote and protect young women's freedom of opinion and expression, both online and offline. Such "authorities" do not provide any legal administrative, policy or other measures to protect young women from sexual and gender based violence and harassment online²², including related with their activism. As we wrote already to UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences, there are no femicide watch or observatory in the occupied Crimea. Russia's de-facto authorities do not have such activities and the civil society structures in the Crimea were totally eradicated since 2014, they do not take any measures including research and studies undertaken to analyse femicide or gender related killings of young women and girls, or homicides of young women by intimate partners or family members and other femicides. And more, Russia's punitive system in the Crimea has no practical goal to investigate the crimes against persons, including the femicide cases against girls and youth²³.

The ways of influence on above-pointed illegal behavior of the Russia-controlled "authorities" and punitive structures in the Crimea may have forms of decision of international courts and

⁷ <https://arc.construction/5070?lang=ru>

⁸ <https://arc.construction/13667?lang=ru>

⁹ <https://arc.construction/13920?lang=ru>

¹⁰ <https://arc.construction/7582?lang=ru>

¹¹ <https://arc.construction/12236>

¹² <https://arc.construction/13815>

¹³ <https://arc.construction/10142?lang=ru>

¹⁴ <https://arc.construction/12003?lang=ru>

¹⁵ <https://arc.construction/14869>

¹⁶ <https://arc.construction/7719>

¹⁷ <https://arc.construction/5018?lang=ru>

¹⁸ <https://arc.construction/15590>

¹⁹ <https://arc.construction/6243?lang=ru>

²⁰ <https://arc.construction/5881>

²¹ <https://arc.construction/4710?lang=ru>

²² <https://arc.construction/14318>

²³ <https://arc.construction/14300>

organizations, of sanction policy and on collective interstate negotiation the situation with human rights in the Crimea. Ukraine's civil society and national human rights institutions gather information on the violation the opinion and expression in the Crimea, on the relevant negative practices or policies of the Russia-controlled "authorities"²⁴ and punitive structures²⁵. But their efforts on defense and protection the Crimean young women's activisms have to be supported by the international organizations.

All the modern Crimea-located internet intermediaries are under full control of Russian de-facto "authorities"²⁶ and Russia block access to key online independent media²⁷ and all the offline media at the peninsula²⁸. So the online and legacy media can not play the adequate role to ensure the rights of Crimean young women to free expression and opinion exchange for their activities. All independent young women journalists in the Crimea are persecuted by the Russia's punitive bodies. The arrests of Lutfie Zudieva and Mumina Saliyeva, activists of the Crimean Solidarity public association, are worth mentioning. In 2019, the occupiers declared "internationally wanted" the journalist of the "ATR TV" channel Gulsum Khalilova, this channel was banned in 2015 in the Crimea and it broadcast from the Ukraine's mainland²⁹.

It is worth to mention that Crimean Tatar woman, lawyer Lila Gemedzhi, who defends the rights of illegal prisoners, was recently awarded the Dutch Tulip Human Rights Prize. This award is given to those who work in conditions of risk to their own safety. It is a good example how the third countries may support the Crimean young women – journalists, bloggers and human defenders – for their activities.

UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine and OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine have in their mandate the research on the situation with the fundamental freedoms for young women and girls, also as for gender issues in the Crimea but they do not pay the adequate attention on those issues in their reports. We believe that a special research on the situation with gender equality and the freedom of opinion and expression of the armed conflicts and related "grey zones" like Crimea, done by the UN Working Group, may be a starting point for improvement of the situation. The Working Group's visit to Ukraine, including the Crimea would contribute to collection of information, and would enable to make a first-hand impression of the situation with young women's activism and other relevant issues in the region.

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²⁴ <https://arc.construction/11966>

²⁵ <https://arc.construction/12411>

²⁶ <https://arc.construction/11334?lang=ru>

²⁷ <https://arc.construction/13136?lang=ru>

²⁸ <https://arc.construction/14211?lang=ru>

²⁹ <https://arc.construction/15590>