



ASSOCIATION OF REINTEGRATION
OF CRIMEA

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To the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief

Advocacy of Hatred as Challenges to the Freedom of Belief in Crimea

The Association of Reintegration of Crimea, as a registered non-governmental organisation, herewith submits the following responses (submission) to the questionnaire of the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Religion or Belief, for the Special Rapporteur's forthcoming report to be presented at the 55th session of the UN Human Rights Council. Our responses (submission) are devoted to the situation of with advocacy of hatred and freedom of belief in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and city of Sevastopol (hereinafter – Crimea). The response deals with the issues identified by the Association in its work, namely the issue of intentional and organised Russian policy of discrimination against some religious groups in the Crime, and after February 2022, at Ukraine's mainland.

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 75/29¹, 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 religion.

Human rights violations in the Crimea, including oppression the freedom of religion in framework of the racial and other discrimination of the Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians now are the subject to consideration in international courts, including the International Court of Justice (case 166)² and the European Court of Human Rights (case 20958/14 and others).³

In the framework of scope of advocacy of hatred the important issue is the oppressions of the freedom of belief as a part of racial discrimination, regarding the demands of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, 1965.

¹ for example, <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/73/263>

² <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/166/166-20191108-JUD-01-00-EN.pdf>

³ <http://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng?i=001-207622>

The above-pointed International Court of Justice's case 166 "Ukraine v. Russia" covers the issues of discrimination of the ethnic Ukrainians and indigenous Crimean Tatars on their linguistic, educational and cultural rights and the links between such human rights' violations and the religious rights of ethnic Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians in the Crimea, is the extremely important issue regarding permanent advocacy of hatred from Russian invaders' "administration" there.

Russian de-facto "authorities" in the Crimea illegally use the Russia's legislation banning the "extremism", ban some religious groups like "Jehovah's Witnesses" and discriminate others like Orthodox Church of Ukraine. So they violate as mental privacy of Crimea's residents so penalize the persons thoughts reflected as in preaching so in the private communication and in the social networks. Crimea's residents are not free in their thoughts on religious issues from coercive or other illegal interference of Russia's punitive structures in the Crimea⁴.

Russian de-facto "authorities" in the Crimea in their illegal policy of "fighting with the extremism" use advocacy of hatred destroy the framework of realization of freedom of conscience, and freedom of religion or belief, freedom of association, of media, of meetings on the grounds of establishment the authoritarian militarized regime in the peninsula.

Russian de-facto "authorities" in the Crimea use advocacy of hatred to punish, discriminate and persecute Muslims, Christians and the "Jehovah's Witnesses" as for their thought and position so for their belief and opinion, also as for the self-expressions and manifestations of their religion or belief. So the proposed differences have no significance for defense and support of Crimean residents' rights.

Russia established in the Ukraine's Crimea illegally, violating the IV Geneva Convention, the Russia's legislation on issues of the registration the religious structures, on the "fight with extremism" on the order or peaceful assemblies and media, including the preachment issues.

As Russia established in the Ukraine's Crimea atmosphere of total control, intimidation and banned all independent media, punished the journalists and bloggers, the possibility of full and transparent gathering information on violation of freedom of thought is too limited in the peninsula. Victims of repressions are afraid to point on their issues as they may be after named not "extremists" but even "terrorists" by the Russia's punitive bodies.

Russia's propaganda in the Crimea uses the hate speech and disinformation against the Muslims (including indigenous Crimean Tatars), Christians (including ethnic Ukrainians) and the "Jehovah's Witnesses" that makes the strong influence on freedom of thought. Indigenous Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians as discriminated groups, are in the extremely vulnerable situations in the Crimea now.

Ukraine's civil society and national human rights institutions gather information on the violation the freedom of thought in the Crimea, on the relevant negative practices or policies of the Russia-controlled "authorities" and punitive structures. But their efforts have to be supported by the international organizations.

As it is well-known, since 24th of February 2022 Russia committed broad and open military aggression against Ukraine. Due last nine months of fights Russia occupied some

⁴ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2020/09/23/in-occupied-crimea-the-hate-language-towards-the-ukrainians-and-crimean-tatars-is-getting-stronger/>

territories of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhya and other regions and strong fights are going near cities with total population more than 2 millions persons near the frontline⁵⁶⁷⁸⁹

Russia-controlled troops and mercenaries committed in Ukraine, during this invasion, gross violation of international humanitarian law and international human rights' law already, including broad crimes against freedom of belief¹⁰¹¹¹²¹³¹⁴¹⁵. Since 2022 advocacy hatred, including hate speech was noticed in Crimea¹⁶¹⁷¹⁸ against Ukrainian Orthodox¹⁹²⁰²¹, Muslims²²²³ and Jews²⁴²⁵²⁶; anti-Semitic statements of illegal officials become stronger in 2023²⁷.

The Association of Reintegration of Crimea believes that a special research on the situation with the freedom of thought in conditions of the armed conflicts and related “grey zones” like Crimea, done by the UN Special Rapporteur, may be a starting point for improvement of the situation. The Special Rapporteur’s visit to Ukraine would contribute to collection of information, and would enable the Rapporteur to make a first-hand impression of the situation with situation with the freedom of thought in the region.

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⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/association-reintegration-crimea-ukraine-minnesota-protocol.pdf>
⁶ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/AssociationReintegrationCrimeaSubmission.pdf>
⁷ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/association-reintegration-crimea.pdf>
⁸ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/association-reintegration-crimea.pdf>
⁹ https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2022-05/arc_replies-dp.pdf
¹⁰ <https://www.icj-cij.org/public/files/case-related/182/182-20220307-PRE-01-00-EN.pdf>
¹¹ <https://web.archive.org/web/20220819172853/https://arc.construction/26892>
¹² <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/03/1113652>
¹³ <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/05/27/occupied-crimea-religion-and-war-propaganda/>
¹⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/03/ukraine-apparent-war-crimes-russia-controlled-areas>
¹⁵ <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/01/17/from-hate-speech-to-calls-for-genocide-crimean-example/>
¹⁶ <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/03/19/the-aggressors-destructive-actions-using-the-religious-factor/>
¹⁷ <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/05/27/occupied-crimea-religion-and-war-propaganda/>
¹⁸ <https://arcrimea.org/en/analytics/2023/02/04/crimean-collaborators-religious-services/>
¹⁹ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/08/christmas-hysteria-from-crimean-collaborators/>
²⁰ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/05/17/criminal-speaker-decided-to-add-more-orthodoxy/>
²¹ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2022/12/21/crimean-collaborators-criminally-exploit-church-issue/>
²² <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/02/03/russian-occupiers-prepare-new-provocations-against-crimean-tatars/>
²³ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/10/27/oil-sports-and-retaliatory-strike-of-crimean-mufti/>
²⁴ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/01/28/contemporary-crimean-nazis-and-holocaust/>
²⁵ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2022/12/01/aggressor-try-to-explain-de-occupation-of-crimea-by-us-israeli-lobby/>
²⁶ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/10/24/world-order-and-cargo-cult-of-crimean-swindler/>
²⁷ <https://arcrimea.org/en/news/2023/07/19/criminal-speaker-announced-the-fight-against-cosmopolitanism-in-sports/>