Regional Crisis and Conflict Management After the Russian Invasion of Crimea: The Case of Crimean Tatars

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Abstract

The response of the Crimean Tatars politicians, civil society and nation toward the Russian occupation of Crimea is clear cut and obvious. They have condemned the Russian aggression toward the Ukrainian territorial integrity and they have not recognized the annexation of Crimea by the decision of the Russian Parliament (Duma). They have used nonviolent strategy and civil disobedience tactics to pressure the Russian political elites and public opinion about unjust and unlawful act. Moreover, the Crimean Tatars have raised their demands in international environment, especially the Western capitals, post-Soviet countriesandTurkeywhere a largenumber of theCrimean Tatar diaspora has lived since the end of 18th century. This paper aims to analyse the current situation of the CrimeanTatars after the 2014 Crimean Crisis. It examines how the CrimeanTatars conditions have evolved from bad to worse under the Russian occupation forces for the last two years. Also, the paper focuses on Turkey's reactions to this regional conflicts in the Black Sea region from the conflict management perspective.

Keywords: Crimea, Crimean Occupation, Crimean Tatars, Conflict Management, Conflict Resolution

Özet

Kırım'ın Rusya tarafından işgal edilmesine Kırım Tatar politikacılarının, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının açık şekilde karşı çıktığı görülmüştür. Kırım Tatarları Ukrayna'nın toprak bütünlüğüne Rusya'nın yaptığı saldırıyı ve Rus Parlamentosu Duma'nın Kırım'ı ilhak kararını tanımamışlardır. Kırım Tatarları şiddetsizlik ve sivil itaatsizlik taktikleri kullanarak Rus politik elitleri ve kamuoyunu Rusya'nın haksız ve yasadışı hareketlerine karşı uyarmaya çalışmıştır. Ayrıca Kırım Tatarları başta uluslararası kamuoyu olmak üzere Batı başkentleri, Sovyet sonrası ortaya çıkan devletler ve özellikle 18 yüzyıldan beri çok sayıda Kırım Tatarı diaspora mensubunun bulunduğu Türkiye'de Kırım'ın işgaline karşı faaliyetlerde bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmanın amacı, Kırım Tatarları'nın 2014 Kırım Krizi sonrası durumları açıklanmıştır. Kırım Tatarları'nın Kırım'daki durumu kötüden daha kötü duruma gelmiştir. Bu çalışmada aynı zamanda Türkiye'nin Karadeniz bölgesindeki bölgesel çatışmalara çatışma yönetimi açısından nasıl tepki verdiği de incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kırım, Kırım'ın Işgali, Kırım Tatarları, ÇatışmaYönetimi, Çatışma Çözümü

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Introduction

There is a chilling coincidencebetween Russian-involved conflicts and Olympics. When there was an Olympics event, Russia may have involved in regional conflicts. The Russia-Georgia conflict has started during the extravagant opening ceremony of the 2008 Twenty-ninth Summer Olympic Games on August 8, 2008.Putin was in Beijing for the Olympics opening ceremony and Medvedev was on vacation. The conflict was initiated with shelling and bombardment by Georgian troops on the city of Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetiaon the early hours of August 8 (Svyatets 2016, 97).The six-day war of Russia's massive military response was ended with the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia – two separatist regions of Georgia – by Russia. When the 2014 Winter Olympic Games were still going on in Sochi, the order of the Crimea occupation were given from Moscow in February 2014.Unlike the 2008 Georgian-Russian War, the Crimean Occupation has almost achieved without any artillery fire by using Putin's hybrid war strategy (Ozcelik 2016, 167-195).

The Crimean Tatars were the only force to resist Putin's unilateral, illegal and unlawful invasion of the Green Peninsula (Yeşil Ada) on 26 February 2014. The same day, the leader of the Russian Union, Sergey Aksanov and his supporters gathered in front of the Crimean Parliament building chanting "Russia!" "Russia!, and waving the Russian flags (Prentice 2014). At the same time, almost twelve thousands Crimean Tatars confronted the Russian demonstrators and pro-Russian parliamentarians especially the Crimean Parliament President Vladimir Konstantinov who planned to enter the building to vote for the unification of Crimea to Russia. While the Crimean Tatars chanted "Glory to Russia", some of them have been calling the crowd to "Calm Down" (CemaatTokta) (NTV, 2014). The next night, mysterious 50 masked and unmarked Russian soldiers so called "Little Green Men" entered the Crimean Parliament building. In the morning, 100 police and many Russia supporters gathered in front of the building. The homeland of the Crimean Tatars were lost overnight from relatively democratic and pro-Western Ukraine to Putin's authoritarian Russia (Williams 2016).

After Crimea occupied by the Russian armed forces, the annexation of Crimea has begun with the referendum which was announced to be held in March 17, 2014. The official results of the referendum indicated that there was attendance of 85 % of the Crimean population out of % 97 approved the accession to Russia. The Supreme Council of Crimea declared that Crimea is an independent state according to the result of referendum. The same day, the Russian President Putin signed "Executive Order" to recognize Crimea by the Russian Federation. The next day in the Kremlin, there was a treaty was signed for Crimea becoming a part of Russian territory (Meyers and Paker 2014). Unlike many other examples, all these transitory process only aimed to integrate Crimea into Russia not to achieve independent statehood of Crimea.

The Crimean Tatars, a Turkic and Muslim group, were forcibly deported en masse by Stalin on 18 May 1944. As a chosen trauma, the event was called the "Sürgün.", the Soviet Genocide of the Crimean Tatars.They have waged peaceful and nonviolent struggle during the Soviet era and have returned to their homeland since 1989. According to the latest 2001 Ukrainian census, the numbers of the Crimean Tatars were 243,433 out of total of 2,033,700 that account for 12,1 percent of the Crimean population that is 6,4 times more than 1989 census (Ukrcensus 2016).

The chapter aims to analyse the current situation of the Crimean Tatars after the 2014 Crimean Crisis. The methodology is mostly based on the participant observer and historical research. The author is a member of the Crimean Tatars diaspora in Turkey. He has actively involved in the Crimean Tatars associations, followed the "historical events" and uncovered "historical facts". He realises that his perceptions of the present, cultural prejudices and preconceptions and retrieval of archival data may not resulted idealised view of his work. In

order to overcome the methodological difficulties, the researcher attempts to use different resources as much as possible.

The Situation after Crimean Occupation: The Crimean Tatars

The response of the Crimean Tatars politicians, civil society and nation toward the Russian occupation of Crimea is clear cut and obvious. They have condemned the Russian aggression toward the Ukrainian territorial integrity and they have not recognized the annexation of Crimea by the decision of the Russian Parliament (*Duma*). They have used nonviolent strategy and civil disobedience tactics to pressure the Russian political elites and public opinion about unjust and unlawful act. Moreover, the Crimean Tatars have raised their demands in international environment, especially the Western capitals, post-Soviet countries and Turkey where a large number of the Crimean Tatar diaspora has lived since the end of 18th century.

One of the main Russian arguments to occupy Crimea is the violation of human rights of Russians who have lived in Crimea after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the occupation of Crimea in the spring of 2014, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) has found no evidence of discrimination but they were reported human rights violations against Ukrainians and especially the Crimean Tatars in Crimea. The Russian occupation authorities had made unlawful searches at Tatar-language (ATR) and Ukrainian-language radio and television stations. Also, they have raided Islamic, Jewish (because there is a Karaim Tatars who belong to Jewish faith), and Ukrainian religious and civic buildings such as the Crimean Tatars National Mejlis as well as cemeteries have been targeted by Russian vandalists. The Crimean Tatars mentioned that their homeland, Crimea, has become a place hard to live. Since the Ukrainian time, Crimea has been a place for xenophobic activities and racist activities against the Crimean Tatars (OSCE 2015). Before Russia's occupation, the Crimean Tatars relations with local Russian authorities have been tense and at times violent. One example is Crimean so-called Prime Minister Sergei Aksyonov who moved from the Transdniestr region of Moldova to Crimea in 1989. He was leader of the neo-fascist *RusskoeYedynstvo* (Russian Unity formerly called *Avanguard*) (Kuzio2015, 271).

After the occupation of Crimea, the Crimean Tatar *MilliMejlis* insisted that Turkey should participate the Western sanctions against Russia. Also, they demanded the closure of the Straits to the Russian warship and navy within the framework of the *KüçükKaynarca* Treaty and other bilateral and multilateral agreement. In addition, the Mejlis appealed the Turkish authority to send Turkey's navy and ships to the Black Sea. Turkey rejected these requests because of violation of the Montreux Convention and international maritime law. For the deployment of the Turkish navy, Ankara's rejection was based on absence of NATO decision. But both NATO and the US sent their ships to the Black Sea for the reconnaissance missions after the conflict was spilling over to the Eastern Ukraine. These deployments were mostly preventive measures for the Russian expansion and irredentist moves (Ozcelik and Karagul 2015, 43-56).

Lobbying refers to "influencing the government and its leaders in an attempt to sway policy-makers and legislators to address specific issues, often by introducing or revising legislation and policy (Perazzi 2011)." Diasporas are pressure groups who find the potential allies such as academics, journalists, media persons, civil society organizations, and other diaspora groups in order to work on the lobbying mechanisms for building transnational coalitions and bridging. Diasporas attempt to influence foreign policy outcomes and decisions toward their homeland.

The first time in their history, the Crimean Tatars diaspora in Turkey has played a much active role in Turkish foreign policy. Like the Chechen and the Kosovar Albanian diaspora, the Crimean Tatars diaspora has been transformed from passive to active even pro-active lobby activities. Since the seizure of Crimea in 1783 by Russia, many Crimean Tatars have been forced to immigrate "Aktopraklar" or Turkey. There are approximately 5 million Crimean Tatars in Turkey and another 250,000 live in Romania after they escaped from Russian oppression, persecution and tyranny for the last two hundred years (Mack and Surina 2005, 12). There are other diaspora groups in Turkey such as Volga Tatars, the Caucasians and Baskirs whom have fled from the Russian aggression. The total number of diasporas that emigrated from Tsarist Russia/Soviet Republics to Turkey could be more than 17 millions. As a result, there are powerful lobbies that can influence not only Turkish-Russian relations but also Turkish-Ukrainian-Russian trilateral relationship (Williams 2001, 275).

The reactions of the world toward the occupation of Crimea have been using sticks not carrots by punishing Russia mostly with international economic and political sanctions. Two most important countries of Europe, Germany and France, have showed relatively less harsher responses to Russia's aggression than the Eastern European countries (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and the Baltic Republics). Because Germany has dependency on Russian gas and strong economic relations, the Chancellor Merkel has initiated strong sanctions but later in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict process. Similarly, France had to cancel two Mistral types warships deal that Russia has already made the payment in order to modernize the Black Sea Fleet after international pressure to France including US President Barack Obama urged Paris to "press the pause button" on the warship deal with Russia (France 24 Europe 2015; DW, 2015).

On the other hand, many far-right European parties (France's National Front, Austria's and the Netherlands's Freedom Party, Bulgaria's Ataka Party, Greece's Golden Dawn, and United Kingdom's UKIP) and some leftist party (Greece's Syriza and Spain Podemos) has supported or silenced to Russian aggressive acts against Crimea and Ukraine because Kremlin has funded them to implement Putin's hybrid war or II. Cold War strategy (Telegraph 2016; Milliyet 2015). About the reactions of the world community, it is necessary to emphasize that some states have recognized the illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by Russia. The seven states that recognized Crimea is a part of the Russian Federation are as follows: Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, Syria, Afghanistan, Nauru, and Venezuela. Also, others non-state entities such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh have backed up the Russian claims about Crimea and Sevastopol (Attia 2014).

After the illegal seizure and annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Russian Federation President Putin has addressed at the Russian Parliament Federation Assembly (Duma). Before and after that speech, Putin has phoned the Crimean Tatar leader Dzhemilev-Kirimoglu and met the Crimean Tatar representatives in Sochi and made following promises to the Crimean Tatars:

- In order to help the rehabilation of the Crimean Tatars, the Russian authorities adopt one-year and five-year plans.
- To recognize the Crimean Tatar Kurultai and other Kurultai's institutions such as MilliMejlis.
- To resolve the Crimean Tatars' legal, economic, land, and property problems.
- The cultural rights of the Crimean Tatars will be restored and protected
- To improve the education institutions in the Crimean Tatar language.

• To use the Crimean Tatar place and geographical names after they were changed the 18 May 1944 deportation (Sürgün).

• To support the Crimean Tatar language press and mass media institutions (World Freedom Foundation 2015, 212-215; World Bulletin 2014; President of Russia 2014).

After last two years, the situation of the Crimean Tatars has been deterioratedin many aspects (Ozcelik 2015). First, there have been many unresolved crimes, especially kidnapping of the Crimean Tatars activities. The last kidnapping happened to Mr. Ervin Ibragimov who is the Crimean Tatars activists and the member of the Crimean Tatars World Congress Board of Directors. The Amnesty International and other human rights organizations condemned the kidnapping of Mr.Ibragimov by masked uniformed men (Amnesty International 2016). Second, the Crimean Tatars national representation organs – Kurultai and the Crimean Tatars National Assembly (MilliMejlis) – activities have been suspended "to prevent anti-Russian acts and to oppose the Russian Federal laws" on 13 April 2016. Later, the Crimea's Supreme Court totally banned the MilliMejlis"due to its extremist activities"on 26 April 2016 (The Guardian 2016). Third, two important Crimean Tatars national leaders, Mustafa Dzhemilev-Kirimoglu and RefatChubarov, both of whom are the members of the Ukrainian Parliament (*VerkhovnaRada*) have been imposed prohibition to enter Crimea on 22 April 2014 for the next five years until 2019. The Turkish Foreign Ministry has harshly condemned all Russian activities against the Crimean Tatars (TC DisisleriBakanliği 2016a).

The Crimean Tatars have been employed nonviolence and civil disobedience tactics in order to return their homeland and take back their fundamental rights since the Soviet Union time. For example, when Mikhail Gorbachev was in power, a group of the Crimean Tatars has done unexpected and courageous protest and defiance acts against the Soviet repression and oppression on 23-24 July 1987 at the heart of Moscow in the Kremlin and the Red Square (Bohdan and Swoboda 1990, 275).After the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the Crimean Tatars have again employed "Sharpian nonviolent strategies" with peaceful demonstrations. The Russian occupation authorities have used intimidation tactics including imposing twenty-three thousand dollars fine who attend any protest activities against the Russian Crimean authorities (QHA 2014). The Crimean Tatars language TV station (ATR) had its broadcast license revoked and moved its studios to Kyiv (DW 2016).Many Crimean Tatars homes and businesses have been raided by the Crimean security forces (RFE/RL 2016).Human Rigths Watch and other international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have reported that Russians have cracked down the Crimean Tatars mosques and religious schools (medrese) and confiscated many religious books including the Muslims' holy book the Qur'an (Human Rights Watch 2014).Also, Russia has forced the Crimean Tatars to accept the Russian citizenship and passport with the "passportization process". Approximately fifteen thousands out of three hundred thousands of the Crimean Tatars have moved from the Peninsula after one year of the occupation as they viewed this experience as the second forced deportation (Sürgün) (Paul 2015, 3-4).

Turkey and the Crimean Tatars

Turkey has followed "middle road approach" about the Crimea and Ukrainian Crisis up until the shooting down the Russian plane near the Turkish-Syrian border. Turkey's position was clear about two issues: She supports the territorial integrity of Russia and she declared not to recognize the seizure and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Also, Turkey has voted in favor of supporting the United Nations General Assembly decision about the territorial integrity of Ukraine on 27 March 2014. The Turkish foreign policy makers stated several times that

Turkey does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation through illegal and illegitimate "referendum" held in Crimea on March 2014. Also, Turkey strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and de-facto situation (Turkish Foreign Ministry 2014). But Turkey's stance about Crimea can be viewed from realist perspective of international relations. The regional real-politik is an important deterministic factor for Turkey's foreign policy toward Crimea and Crimean Tatars.

At the same time, Turkey has not participated the Western-led sanctions against Russia. Moreover, Turkey has intensified her relations with Russia during this era. Even Russia abandoned energy pipeline project with the West, Turkey and Russia have proposed the "Turkish Stream" pipeline project in order to transfer Russian oil and gas into the Western market via Turkey.

Turkey has demanded diplomatic explanation of the Crimean Tatars situation after Russian's aggressive and provocative actions. As a fact-finding mission, Turkey sent a committee to Crimea. The committee prepared a report titled as "the Situation of the Crimean Tatars after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation". In the report, it is stated that the Russian Federation has violated basic human rights of the Crimean Tatars during the occupation of Crimea in 27 February 2014, the referendum on 16 March 2014 and the annexation decision of the Russian Federation on 18 March 2014 (Anadolu Agent 2015). Particularly, freedom of speech and free press, language and education rights, right of property, right to fair trial, right of dwelling were violated and the Crimean Tatars were forced to choice the Russian citizenship and Russian passport (QHA 2015a).

Turkey's middle road approach has begun to change when Putin visited to the Armenian capital, Erivan for the 100th anniversary of the 1915 Incident / the Armenian Genocide. Turkish authorities have supported the Second World Crimean Tatar Congress in Ankara between 1-2 August 2015. 184 Crimean Tatar civil society organization from 12 different countries have sent 480 delegates to unite all the Crimean Tatar under one structure.In the Congress, it was mentioned that the dialogue initiative with the Russian and Crimean authorities have been futile and given no result. Because of the nonviolent characteristics of the Crimean Tatar national movement, all Tatars emphasized the continuation of dialogue with Russia. In addition to this, the Crimean Tatars decided to support in all international platforms the territorial integrity of Ukraine and voiced their objection to the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. Also, they believed that Turkey should play more constructive role for the solution of the Crimean crisis (Yılmaz 2015, 9-14).

Turkey's reactions against the occupation of the Peninsula can be evaluated within the realist and neo-realist perspectives. Since the 2014 Crimea Crisis, Turkey has supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine and refused to recognize unlawful annexation of Crimea by Russia. She has declared the Ukraine Crisis should be resolved within the framework of intenraitonal law and diplomatic tools and the rights and interests of the Crimean Tatars should be guaranteed (TC DisisleriBakanligi 2016b). After two months of the referendum in Crimea in March 2014, Turkey has given moral support to the Crimean Tatars by inviting their national leader Mustafa Dzhemilev-Kirimogluto receive the "Republic Medal" from the President Abdullah Gul (AnadoluAjansı 2014).Another important support was to treat the Crimean Tatar leader Kırımoglu in a state level protocol and made a press conference with the Foreign Minister AhmetDavutoglu (TC DisisleriBakanligi 2014).The first time in Turkish history, three main parties (AK Party, MHP; and CHP) included the Crimean Tatar in their election declarations(AKP 2015; QHA 2015b; QHA 2015c).

The above mentioned Turkish policy toward the Crimean Tatars may be categorized positive developments. But Turkey has mostly followed "balanced indifference" policy about the Crimean Crisis because of her dependence of Russian energy, tourism, trade and economy. Turkey has refused to participate the Western-led economic sanctions against Russia. After the EU sanctions against Russia and cancelation of "South Stream" project, both Turkey and Russia have proposed "Turkish Stream" project in order to transfer the Russian gas into the European markets. Moreover, Russia has given six percent sale to Turkey on gas trade and Turkey has awarded the Akkuyu nuclear plant tender to the Russian company. In short, Turkey has used the opportunity to increase its economic relations with Russia. Turkish businessmen have signed 12,5 billion dollars investment agreement with Russia in Crimea. Also, in August 2015, Crimean Turkish Businessmen Council was established (Hurriyet 2015). In short, Turkish-Russian relations have been very friendly and cooperative up until shooting down the Russian warplanes by the Turkish fighter pilots in the Turkish airspace.

Last Words

In summary, Russian illegal and unlawful first occupation by Russian hybrid war tactics then annexation of Crimea by controversial referendum have negatively affected the stability and peace in the Black Sea and Caucasus regions. The Western powers, especially the United States and the European Union, have implemented failed soft power tactics and sanctions-based policy. After Crimea, Russia has entered the Syrican conflict as a main player in order to show its irredentist and expansionist desires with her military and political muscles in the backyard of Turkey and the Middle East region.

Many Ukrainians have disappointed with the Euromaidan and colourful revolutions that aimed to materialize better future with hope of the integration of NATO and EU. The EU-led sanctions have not produced anticipated results against the Russian double containment policy because the Europe has high sensitivity and dependence to Russian energy resources. Russia has implemented double containment policy toward Turkey by involving militarily, politically and economically to Crimea and Syria. Moreover, Russia has had good relations with Iraq, İran and Armenia in order to pressure Turkey.

The Turkish main foreign policy toward Crimea and the Crimean Tatars has been "balanced realist constructivism" that combines realist power and geopolitical/geoeconomical/ geostrategic parts with the constructivist identity, values, international norms and regimes and decision-making processes. Apart from above realist moves, Turkey has supported the Ukrainian territorial integrity (international norm), the resolution of crisis within international law and diplomacy (peace value) and the defending human security of the Crimean Tatars by respecting their human rights and freedoms. Because Turkey and Russia has inter-dependent relations in many areas including mixed families, energy, economy, trade and tourism, both sides may use dialogue and diplomatic solutions to resolve their differences in many foreign policy issues. One indicator is the voting of extension of Russian sanctions at the European Council Parliament Assembly (ECPA) at January 2015. Total of 10 Turkish parliamentarian representatives at EUPA, four of them rejected extension of sanctions, four of them used absentee votes and only two of them supported the continuation of sanctions against Russia (QHA 2015d).

The only resistance of the Russian occupation in Crimea has come from the Crimean Tatars with nonviolent tools. The Crimean Tatars have made big differences on the ground and

made harder for Russia to control Crimea in comparison to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. When the Russian armed men were taken over the Crimean Parliament on February 26, the Crimean Tatars held a large rally in front of the Parliament and successfully opposed to Russian takeover and repelled pro-Russian separatists from the Parliament (Shevel 2014). The Crimean Tatars have suffered during their genocide-like forced deportation (Sürgün) and exile during the Soviet time. When the Little Green Men entered Crimea on March 2014, the memories of the past chosen trauma have resurfaced again and the fear of second forced deportation has forced to flee thousands of the Crimean Tatars to the Ukraine. Also, Putin who came to power in 1999 and crushed Chechen independence bid with an iron fist makes the remaining Crimean Tatars prospect of living constant oppression and tyranny under the New Tsar rule.

The situation of the Crimean Tatars is further complicated by the fact that they are again squeezed among the power struggles of big powers, Russia, Ukraine, the West, and even Turkey. Also, the Crimean Tatars have seen wrongly as İslamist jihadists with the existing biases by the Russian society and the Russian mass media has played the Western concern about the rising Islamic terrorism to put the Crimean Tatars as a part of worldwide jihadist terrorist network. The Crimean Tatars will never declare jihad on Russia because they have always used nonviolent and peaceful methods to return their homeland and get back their fundamental human rights and freedoms.However, the xenophobia and Islamophobia has increased in the Western and Central regions of Ukraine because most of the Crimean Tatars have migrated those regions and "the major part of population is known for its religiosity and are mostly Greek Catholics." (Brylov 2016,279).Also, it should be mentioned that the Crimean Tatars have been structurally discriminated by the Ukrainian government until the 2014 Crimean Crisis. Moreover, they have seen little or no political, economic and social improvement in their situation under the Ukrainian rulers. For example, the Ukraine has accepted the Crimean Tatars' rights to return to the Crimean Peninsula from exile, but she does not give full citizenship in order to integrate them into the Crimean society. Most of the Crimean Tatars have obtained the Ukrainian citizenship, voted first time in the 2002 elections and seven Crimean Tatars became the member of the Crimean Supreme Council (Kuzio 2015, 268).In 1994-95, almost identical crisis has taken place between Ukraine and the Russian-supported Crimean authorities. The crisis have resolved with a cooperative agreement with the help of successful third party intervention and fact-finding missions, namely the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe(OSCE) – the High Commissioner of National Minorities (HCNM), Mr.Max van der Stoel. The absence of the democratic and peace-loving Western powers reactions has resulted in the beginning of fearful, oppressive and lonely living conditions for the Crimean Tatars for the last two and half years. Unfortunately, the Crimean conflict has been evolving toward "frozen conflict" category and becoming deep-rooted and protracted ethnic conflict at the heart of Europe after the violent disintegration of the former Yugoslavia republics.

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