

UKRAINE



УКРАЇНА

STATEMENT

by

the delegation of Ukraine

at

the Third committee of the 69th session of the
General Assembly of the United Nations
on the agenda item 66
“Rights of the Indigenous Peoples”
New York, 20 October 2014

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Mr. Chairman,

The Delegation of Ukraine has the honour to align itself with the statement made by the European Union.

We welcome the outcome document of the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, held in New York in September this year, with the broad participation of the representatives of indigenous peoples from all over the globe. The outcome document is action oriented and inclusive. It constitutes a framework of our common efforts aimed at promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples as an increasingly vulnerable category facing serious challenges in the process of preserving their identity and satisfying its social, economic and cultural needs in today's world.

Ukraine is strongly committed to the implementation of the first World Conference outcome document. Having officially endorsed the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Ukraine has undertaken a number of practical steps on the national and local level in order to guarantee the promotion of the cultural, linguistic and religious rights of the indigenous peoples of Crimea, Ukraine, first of all the Crimean Tatars. Those people have no other homeland than Crimea, Ukraine.

Mr. Chairman,

Occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation has brought about the atmosphere of tension, aggression and intolerance in the territory of the peninsula. Many of those who used to be a part of Crimea's multicultural and friendly family, within Ukraine, now have become unwanted minorities facing thorough discrimination and repression. Crimean Tatar community in Crimea is undergoing the most severe suppression. Their cultural, lingual and political rights and freedoms have been curtailed. They are forced to leave the peninsula. Their activists are being threatened, kidnapped, tortured, and murdered. Their houses are being searched by the secret services. Their leaders are denied access to Crimea. Entire chapters of reports of the international organizations and monitoring missions are being dedicated to this issue, documenting the facts of ill-treatment and repression conducted by the Russian occupational authorities in relation to the indigenous peoples of Crimea, primarily Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians.

The Russian authorities, disregarding the Crimean Tatars' status as the indigenous people of Crimea, systematically abuse their civil, political and cultural

rights. The introduction of Russian Federation legislation, in contravention with General Assembly resolution 68/262, continues to curtail freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, religion or belief. Property rights have been violated through 'nationalisation' and the illegal seizure of property by decision of the de facto authorities and actions by the so-called 'Crimean self-defence'. Law enforcement personnel continued to conduct searches, particularly among the Crimean Tatar and Ukrainian population, claiming to look for 'extremist' material. Those inhuman and criminal practices are very regrettable as this year marks the 70th anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people from Crimea by the Soviet regime.

Mr. Chairman,

Ukraine is making everything possible to render assistance to the Crimean Tatars. Crimean Tatar IDPs are being facilitated in terms of residence, as well as the access to the basic needs such as medical assistance, social protection and education on the mainland. An institute of the President's Commissioner on Crimean Tatars was established in Kyiv with the aim of preserving and developing the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of the Crimean Tatar people within Ukraine. Crimean Tatars report human rights violations to Ukrainian state bodies and apply to local Mejlis offices in Crimea for legal aid. Collection of evidence, including official correspondence and witness reports are being conducted on the ground.

We urge the United Nations, its bodies, agencies, and mechanisms, as well as the United Nations Member States, to stand firmly by the side of Crimean Tatars who are now suffering from repression and ideology of hate and intolerance. Ukraine looks forward to working with all actors within the UN family and the UN membership to achieve the noble goal of supporting the rights of indigenous peoples and making the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples a reality.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.