



INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ БЕЗОПАСНОСТЬ


DOI: 10.22363/2313-0660-2022-22-4-755-770

Research article / Научная статья

The Republic of Türkiye and Ukraine: Using the Crimean Tatar Question in Foreign Policy after 2014

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Abstract. In historical retrospect, the use of national issues and contradictions has repeatedly become the weakening mechanisms for some great powers in regard to others. In this case, various technologies to construct national myths and ideologies based on tribalism and national exclusiveness and superiority were applied. After the “Crimean spring” in 2014, the Crimean Tatar issue gained a new level of relevance. The Republic of Türkiye and Ukraine are actively using the Crimean Tatar factor to oppose the reintegration of Crimea into the Russian Federation and, consequently, to weaken Russia’s positions in the Black Sea and Mediterranean region. In the article the authors analyze the peculiarities of the influence of the Republic of Türkiye on the Crimean Tatars, as well as the Ukrainian initiatives in relation to the Crimean Tatars and joint Turkish-Ukrainian projects, with the target group consisting of the Crimean Tatars. The methodological basis of the research is system-based, geopolitical, civilizational and institutional approaches, which are implemented both directly and by using a number of general scientific and political science methods. The current policy of Türkiye and Ukraine on the Crimean Tatar issue has common features. Firstly, it is currently topical for the policy elites of these states, both at the domestic and international political levels. Under these circumstances, if the Crimean Tatar issue is an opportunity for Kiev to re-establish its jurisdiction over Crimea, then for Ankara the Crimean Tatar population helps to enlist the electoral support, as well as to consider Crimea and the Black Sea region as a Turkish sphere of influence. Secondly, the conditional Turkish-Ukrainian alliance presents itself as a “protector” of the Crimean Tatars from “Russian aggression.” Thirdly, Türkiye and Ukraine are projecting a positive state image by demonstrating protection of interests and observance of the Crimean Tatars rights on the territory of Russia. Fourthly, the actions of Türkiye and Ukraine in terms of the Crimean Tatar can be characterized as a double standard policy. This thesis is confirmed by the national policy of the Republic of Türkiye, and the approaches of Ukraine to the solution of the Crimean Tatar issue before the reunification of Crimea with Russia.


Key words: Russia, the Republic of Türkiye, Ukraine, Crimea, Crimean Tatars, Crimean Tatar issue, Black Sea Region



For citation: Demeshko, N. E., & Irkhin, A. A. (2022). The Republic of Türkiye and Ukraine: Using the Crimean Tatar question in foreign policy after 2014. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations*, 22(4), 755—770. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2022-22-4-755-770>

Турецкая Республика и Украина: использование крымско-татарского вопроса во внешнеполитическом курсе после 2014 года

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Аннотация. В исторической ретроспективе использование национальных вопросов и противоречий не раз становились механизмами ослабления одних великих держав в отношении других. При этом применялись различные технологии по конструированию национальных мифов и идеологий на основе трайбализма и национальной исключительности и превосходства. После «Крымской весны» 2014 г. крымско-татарский вопрос получил новый уровень актуализации. Турецкая Республика и Украина активно используют крымско-татарский фактор для противодействия реинтеграции Крыма в состав Российской Федерации и, как следствие, ослабления позиций России в Черноморско-Средиземноморском регионе. Авторы рассматривают особенности влияния Турецкой Республики на крымских татар, анализируют украинские инициативы в отношении крымских татар и совместные турецко-украинские проекты, целевой аудиторией которых выступают крымские татары. Методологической основой исследования выступают системный, геополитический, цивилизационный, институциональный подходы, которые реализованы как непосредственно, так и с использованием ряда общенаучных и политологических методов. Современная политика Турции и Украины по крымско-татарскому вопросу обладает общими характерными чертами. Во-первых, крымско-татарская проблематика актуальна для политических элит данных государств как на внутривнутриполитическом, так и на международном уровнях. При этом, если для Киева крымско-татарский вопрос — это возможность восстановить свою юрисдикцию над Крымом, то для Анкары крымско-татарское население Крыма позволяет заручиться электоральной поддержкой внутри Турции, а также рассматривать Крым и Черноморский регион как турецкую сферу влияния. Во-вторых, условный турецко-украинский альянс позиционирует себя в качестве «защитника» крымских татар от «российской агрессии». В-третьих, Турция и Украина конструируют положительный имидж государств за счет демонстрации защиты интересов и соблюдения прав крымских татар на территории России. В-четвертых, действия Турции и Украины в отношении крымско-татарского народа можно охарактеризовать политикой двойных стандартов. Данный тезис подтверждают национальная политика Турецкой Республики и подходы Украины к решению крымско-татарского вопроса до воссоединения Крыма с Россией.

Ключевые слова: Россия, Турецкая Республика, Украина, Крым, крымские татары, крымско-татарский вопрос, Черноморский регион

Для цитирования: Демешко Н. Э., Ирхин А. А. Турецкая Республика и Украина: использование крымско-татарского вопроса во внешнеполитическом курсе после 2014 года // Вестник Российского университета дружбы народов. Серия: Международные отношения. 2022. Т. 22, № 4. С. 755—770. <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-0660-2022-22-4-755-770>

Introduction

Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in September 2021, Turkish President R.T. Erdoğan stated that he rejected the “annexation” of Crimea and supported “Ukraine’s territorial integrity.”¹ Such rhetoric is

traditional for the Republic of Türkiye. Since 2014, Turkish-Ukrainian relations have reached a new level of development. In addition to military and economic cooperation, the main consolidating factors of the union of the two

¹ Turkish President: Other Countries Must Fulfill Their Obligations to Receive Refugees [Президент Турции: и

другие страны должны выполнять свои обязательства по приему беженцев] // UN. September 21, 2021. (In Russian). URL: <https://news.un.org/ru/story/2021/09/1410332> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

states are the position on the statehood of Crimea, the protection of the rights of Crimean Tatars, and the Su-24 incident in 2015, which temporarily cooled Russian-Turkish relations and incentivized Türkiye to look for new allies. However, despite the clear common position on the Crimean issue, both states have different goals, publicly labeling the events of 2014 as the “annexation” of Crimea. Thus, while for Kiev the problem is more of a territorial nature, for Ankara it is mainly represented by the Turkic factor of its foreign policy. The Republic of Türkiye views Crimea and the Crimean Tatars as an integral part of the “Turkic world,” and the peninsula and the Black Sea region, in their turn, are regarded by Ankara as a Turkish sphere of influence (Avatkov, 2021, p. 222).

The collapse of the Soviet superpower and the political conformism of the post-Soviet elite in the early 1990s, as well as the cultural and historical proximity of the Republic of Türkiye to the Turkic peoples of the former Soviet Union allowed Ankara to declare itself the “big brother” (*ağabey*) of Turkic states (Irkhin, 2016, pp. 104—105). It was during that period that Turkish influence in the Crimean Peninsula intensified. This was facilitated by the repatriation of Crimean Tatars to Crimea (Shevchuk, 2007). Türkiye, by enhancing its authority in the Crimean Tatar community through various projects, has increased its influence in the Black Sea — Mediterranean region and at the same time used the Crimean Tatar factor as an element in the system of containment of geopolitical interests of the Russian Federation in this direction (Irkhin & Demeshko, 2019).

At the same time, despite its non-recognition of the restoration of Russian jurisdiction over Crimea and joint projects with Ukraine to overcome the so-called “temporary occupation,” Ankara pursues a rather flexible policy towards Russia as well (Baranov, 2018, p. 95). For example, Türkiye did not join the anti-Russian sanctions because they were contrary to its economic interests. Moreover, some public structures of the Republic of Türkiye establish communication with the pro-Russian part of Crimean Tatars, while others (Korobov & Smetannikov, 2015, p. 29) continue

to maintain and develop ties with representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People.²

The purpose of the article is to determine the peculiarities of the development of bilateral Turkish-Ukrainian relations in the period after the reunification of Crimea with Russia (2014—2021) and the place of the Crimean Tatar question in the interaction of the Republic of Türkiye as a regional power and Ukraine as a state with an important geopolitical position in the Black Sea region.

To achieve this purpose, the article addresses the following tasks: to investigate the mechanisms of influence of the Republic of Türkiye on the Crimean Tatars; to analyze Ukrainian initiatives regarding the Crimean Tatars; to identify joint Turkish-Ukrainian projects whose target audience are the Crimean Tatars.

The object of the study is Turkish-Ukrainian bilateral relations since the restoration of Russian sovereignty over Crimea. The subject — the Crimean-Tatar aspect of Turkish-Ukrainian relations. The methodological basis of the research is systemic, geopolitical, civilizational, and institutional approaches.

The authors relies on the legal framework of Ukraine, the materials of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of Ukraine and Türkiye, the Ministry of Information Policy (MIP) of Ukraine, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), publications of *derneks* (communities) of Crimean Tatars in Türkiye, reports of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), articles from Ukrainian and Turkish media; the author cites publications of Russian researchers: V.A. Avatkov (2018; 2021), K.N. Akhmadeev (2018), N.S. Belyakova (2015), A.A. Irkhin (2016; Irkhin & Demeshko, 2019), A.A. Korobov, S.S. Smetannikov (Korobov & Smetannikov, 2015). It should be noted that the results of research of the foreign scientific expert community on the Crimean Tatar agenda (Allworth, 1998; Aydın, 2014; Özçelik, 2020; Koçak, 2014; Williams, 2001; 2016; Wilson, 2017; Uehling, 2004; Fisher, 1978; 2010) deserve

² The organization is banned in the Russian Federation.

special attention, as they give an idea of political technologies aimed at the formation of a negative interpretation of the joint history of Russia (Tsarist, Soviet) and Crimean Tatars, as well as the desire to demonstrate various kinds of oppression against this ethnic group by the Russian Federation after 2014 (Demeshko, 2020, pp. 281—288).

The Role of the Crimean Tatar Issue in Turkish Politics

After 2014, the Crimean Tatar question is one of the elements in the system of checks and balances in the interaction of the Republic of Türkiye with the Russian Federation. This is manifested in the formation of a Turkish-Ukrainian military and political alliance (diplomatic support for Kiev, Turkish military and technical supplies to Ukraine), the non-recognition of the current status of Crimea as Russian territory, as well as public diplomatic support for Crimean Tatars. At the same time, Ankara has more significant influence on Crimean Tatars compared to other foreign countries because of its historical, cultural and religious affinity to this ethnic group.

It should be noted that for the Republic of Türkiye the Crimean Tatar issue has not only an international dimension, but is also of interest in terms of domestic politics, namely gaining electoral support. This assertion is confirmed by the active use of the Crimean Tatar factor during the 2014 local elections (Belyakova, 2015, p. 39).

The importance of the Crimean Tatar factor in Turkish politics is also demonstrated by Türkiye's systematic work in relation to this ethnic group. The Crimean Tatar issue is most actively raised by structures such as the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), the Crimean Tatar diaspora, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the media.

YTB was founded in April 2010. Its mission is to coordinate projects whose target audience is Turks living abroad and the so-called fraternal peoples. The main areas of work on the Crimean Tatar agenda are mainstreaming of information about the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944; preservation of the historical heritage of the

Crimean Tatars;³ organization of events dedicated to Crimean Tatar cultural figures.⁴

Turkish influence on the Crimean Tatar issue is also conditioned by a significant diaspora of the Crimean Tatars. There is no exact data on the number of the Crimean Tatars living in the Republic of Türkiye, as the policy of the Turkish authorities is more towards the assimilation of other ethnic groups and no data on the national composition of Türkiye is published officially (Akhmadeev, 2018, p. 27). For this reason, the official resources of the authorities of the Republic of Türkiye, as well as the Turkish media often refer to the Crimean Tatars as Crimean or Crimean Tatar Turks.

The channels of influence of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in the Republic of Türkiye are the Crimean Tatar associations (derneks). At present, there are more than 50 Crimean Tatar derneks operating in Türkiye. About two dozen of them act as branches of the Crimean Turks Culture and Solidarity Association.⁵ After the political events of 2014, the Crimean Tatar diaspora, in addition to providing humanitarian aid and organizing cultural and educational events, began to actively engage in anti-Russian political activities. It is noteworthy that in 2015, 43 public organizations united to form the Platform of Crimean Tatar Organizations of Türkiye. The consolidation was initiated by the central office of the Crimean Turks Culture and Solidarity Association.⁶ The

³ Kırım Tatarlarının Davası YTB Tarafından Dünyaya Duyuruluyor // Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı. May 16, 2015. URL: <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/haberler/kirim-tatarlarinin-davasi-ytb-tarafindan-dunyaya-duyuruluyor> (accessed: 31.10.2021).

⁴ Writer Cengiz Dağcı Was Commemorated on the Centenary of His Birthday // Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı. March 7, 2019. URL: <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/en/news/writer-cengiz-dagci-was-commemorated-on-the-centenary-of-his-birthday> (accessed: 31.10.2021).

⁵ Tarihçe // Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği. June 6, 2017. URL: <http://www.kirimderneği.org.tr/dernek/tarihce> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁶ A Meeting of the Platform of Crimean Tatar Organizations will be Held in Ankara [В Анкаре пройдет заседание Платформы крымскотатарских организаций] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. February 2, 2016. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/obschestvo/v-ankare-proidet-zasedanie-platformi-krimskotatarskih-organizatsii/154490/> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

Crimean Tatar derneks mainstream the Crimean Tatar question both within Turkish society and internationally. The activities of these organizations are implemented in the following areas:

1. Meetings with representatives of the scientific expert community to discuss the specifics of the “reoccupation of Crimea by Russia,”⁷ “violations” of the rights of Crimean Tatars on the peninsula,⁸ and the significance of the national movement of the Crimean Tatars in Ukraine.⁹

2. Rallies near the Russian embassy and protests against the reunification of Crimea with the Russian Federation.¹⁰

3. Statements with a negative reaction to the trials of the Crimean Tatars due to the participation of individual representatives of this ethnic group in the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir.¹¹ Russia is assessed by the Crimean Turks Culture and Solidarity Association as the main threat in the Black Sea region.¹²

⁷ “Türk Ocakları Eskişehir Şubesi Perşembe Sohbetleri” nde Kırım’ın Rusya Tarafından Yeniden İşgali Konuşuldu // Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği. January 21, 2021. URL: <http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/haberler/1265-turk-ocaklari-eskisehir-subesi-persembe-sohbetleri-nde-kirim-in-rusya-tarafindan-yeniden-igali-konusuldu> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁸ Av.Namık Kemal Bayar Bilkent’te Anlattı “Kırım Türkleri ve İşgal Altındaki Kırım” // Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği. February 21, 2021. URL: <http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/haberler/1276-av-namik-kemal-bayar-bilkent-te-anlattı-kirim-turkleri-ve-igal-altındaki-kirim> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁹ 2014 Sonrası Ukrayna Ulus İnşasına Kırım Tatar Milli Hareketinin Etkisi // Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği. January 31, 2021. URL: <http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/haberler/1270-2014-sonrasi-ukrayna-ulus-inasina-kirim-tatar-milli-hareketinin-etkisi> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹⁰ They Won’t Put Up with the “Occupation” [Не смиряются с «оккупацией»] // Znak. February 26, 2017. (In Russian) URL: https://www.znak.com/2017-02-26/v_turcii_u_sten_rossiyskogo_posolstva_proshel_miting_protiv_prisoedineniya_kryma (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹¹ The organization is banned in the Russian Federation.

¹² Russia Poses a Threat to the Black Sea Region — Crimean Turks Culture and Solidarity Association in Turkey [Россия представляет угрозу для Черноморского региона — Общество культуры и взаимопомощи крымских татар Турции] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. November 27, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/politika/rossiya-predstavlyayet-ugrozu-dlya-chernomorskogo-regiona-obschestvo-kulturi-i-vzaimopomoschi-krimskih-tatar-turtsii/196464/> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

4. Funds allocated by the Crimean Tatar diaspora for the construction of mosques in Ukraine,¹³ as well as humanitarian aid to low-income families.¹⁴

5. The second World Congress of the Crimean Tatars in 2015, organized by the Platform of Crimean Tatar Organizations of Türkiye. The Congress resulted in an appeal to the UN and the world community to stop the “illegal annexation” of Crimea, as well as a judicial review of all the alleged “crimes” committed by Russia, from 1783 to the present, for the intentional “extermination” of Crimean Tatars.¹⁵ The Association also organized youth congresses of the Crimean Tatars with the support of the YTB, which also took place in Türkiye.¹⁶

6. Mainstreaming human rights issues and the report on human rights violations in Crimea and Tatarstan, prepared by the Crimean Tatar organization, Crimean Turks Culture and Solidarity Association.¹⁷

¹³ Mosques to be Built in the Henichesk District on the Money of the Crimean Tatar Diaspora of Turkey // Vesti Genicheska [В Геническом районе построят мечети за средства крымскотатарской диаспоры Турции // Вести Геническа]. March 4, 2017. (In Russian). URL: <http://genichesk.co.ua/3420-v-genicheskom-rayone-postroyat-mecheti-za-sredstva-krymskotatarskoy-diaspory-turcii.html> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹⁴ 600 Crimean Tatar Families Received Aid for Ramadan [600 крымскотатарских семей получили помощь на Рамазан] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. July 25, 2014. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/obschestvo/600-krimskotatarskih-semei-poluchili-pomosch-na-ramazan/138489/> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹⁵ Baturin D. II World Congress of Crimean Tatars — New Ideas and Meanings, Old Goals of the Mejlis Leaders // International Affairs [Батурин Д. II Всемирный Конгресс крымских татар — новые идеи и смыслы, старые цели лидеров межлиса // Международная жизнь]. August 18, 2015. (In Russian). URL: <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/13616> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹⁶ Crimean Tatars Will Gather in Ankara for a Youth Congress // Crimea. Realities [В Анкаре крымские татары соберутся на Молодежный конгресс // Крым. Реалии]. May 19, 2019. (In Russian). URL: <https://ru.krymr.com/a/news-ankara-molodezhnyi-kingress-krymskie-tatary/29951076.html> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹⁷ İşgal Altındaki Kırım’da İnsan Hakları İhlalleri ve Rusya Federasyonu’ndaki Genel İnsan Hakları İhlalleri Hakkında // Kırım Türkleri Kültür ve Yardımlaşma Derneği. December 10, 2020. URL: <http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/Dosyalar/Raporlar/InsanHaklari2020.pdf> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

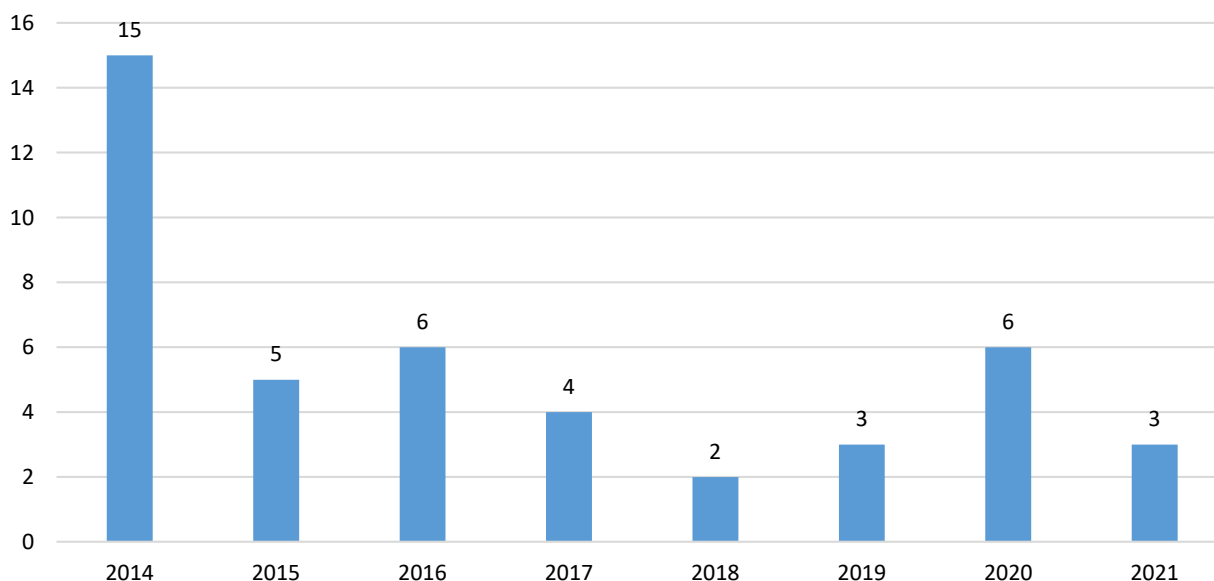


Fig. 1. Dynamics of Publications on the Crimean Tatar Problematics on the Website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, 2014 — October 2021

Source: compiled by the authors based on the data: “İşgal altındaki Kırm'da insan hakları ihlalleri ve Rusya federasyonu'ndaki genel insan hakları ihlalleri hakkında” rapor // The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. December 10, 2020. URL: <http://www.kirimdernegi.org.tr/Dosyalar/Raporlar/InsanHaklari2020.pdf> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

It is worth noting that after 2014 Ankara has quite actively focused on the topic of “violations of the rights” of the Crimean Tatar people on the peninsula and the need to protect this ethnic group (Demeshko, 2020, p. 133). At the same time, Türkiye positions itself as a protector of the Crimean Tatars. This assertion is confirmed by the analysis of statements of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye on the Crimean Tatar agenda and publications of the largest Turkish news agency, Anadolu.

Monitoring of the official website of the Turkish Foreign Ministry from 2014 to October 2021 showed that 44 publications were devoted to the Crimean Tatar agenda. Notably, the largest number of records with regard to Crimean Tatars is in 2014 and amounts to 15 statements (Fig. 1).

In terms of content, the statements can be conditionally categorized into 5 topical units:

1. Non-recognition of the reunification of Crimea with Russia in 2014.
2. “Oppression of rights” of the Crimean Tatars and the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People in Crimea by the Russian leadership.
3. Deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944.

4. Providing humanitarian aid to Crimean Tatars as part of Türkiye’s “soft power.”

5. Supporting Ukraine in its initiatives to counter the reintegration of Crimea into the Russian Federation.

The common feature of the mentioned categories is the formation for the Republic of Türkiye of the image of a protector of the Crimean Tatars’ interests and indicating the importance of the problems of the Crimean Tatars for Ankara. This is manifested in such semantic constructions as “Davutoğlu stated that Crimean Tatar Turks are the main component of Crimea and drew attention to the emphasis Turkey places on the well-being of Crimean Tatar Turks,”¹⁸ “The safety and well-being of Crimean Tatar Turks is a priority for us,”¹⁹

¹⁸ The Fourth Turkish-Russian Joint Strategic Planning Group Meeting Held in Moscow // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-fourth-turkish_russian-joint-strategic-planning-group-meeting-held-in-moscow.en.mfa (accessed: 01.11.2021).

¹⁹ No: 255, 29 July 2014, Press Release Regarding the Treatment of Some Crimean Tatar Turk Patients in

“Turkey, as always, will support Crimean Tatar Turks,”²⁰ “We have repeatedly emphasized our sensitivity to the security and protection of Crimean Tatar Turks,”²¹ “During the meeting the situation in Ukraine and in Crimea, as well as Turkey’s support for the Crimean Tatar Turks were discussed,”²² “Turkey continues today, like before, to support Crimean Tatar Turks,”²³ “Turkey will not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea and will continue to support Crimean Tatars.”²⁴

A similar rhetoric can be seen in the Turkish media landscape. Monitoring of Anadolu Agency’s publications on the Crimean Tatar agenda from 2014 to October 2021 made it possible to determine the specifics of the

Turkey // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-255_-29-july-2014_-press-release-regarding-the-treatment-of-some-crimean-tatar-turk-patients-in-turkey.en.mfa (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²⁰ No: 231, 7 July 2014, Press Release Regarding the Mounting Pressure and Unlawful Practices against the Crimean Tatar National Assembly and the Crimean Tatars // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-231_-7-july-2014_-press-release-regarding-the-mounting-pressure-and-unlawful-practices-against-the-crimean-tatar-national-assembly-and-the-crimean-tatars.en.mfa (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²¹ No: 126, 23 April 2014, Press Release Concerning the Attack against the Crimean Tatar National Assembly // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no-126-23-april-2014-press-release-concerning-the-attack-against-the-crimean-tatar-national-assembly.en.mfa> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²² Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Ahmet Yıldız Received Mustafa Kırimoğlu, Leader of Crimean Tatar Turks, 4 July 2017 // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/disisleri-bakan-yardimcisinin-kirimoglunu-kabulu_en.en.mfa (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²³ No: 217, 19 September 2020, Press Release Regarding the Conviction of Crimean Tatars // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-217_-kirim-tatarlarina-yonelik-mahkumiyet-karari-hk.en.mfa (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²⁴ No: 62, 18 February 2021, Press Release Regarding the Detentions That Took Place in Crimea Yesterday // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. URL: https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-62_-kirim-da-dun-gerceklesen-gozalti-uygulamalari-hk.en.mfa (accessed: 01.11.2021).

interpretation of the processes taking place in Crimea. The main topic of Turkish media publications is human rights in Crimea. In the Turkish media discourse Russia appears as a state that pursues a rather harsh policy of “intimidating” the Crimean Tatars. The arguments include statements by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry,²⁵ representatives of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People,²⁶ and members of human rights organizations.²⁷ The media put the blame for the “violence” incidents on the Russian authorities. And Türkiye is positioned as the protector of the Crimean Tatars. Turkish journalists inform the public about the negative reaction of the Turkish Foreign Ministry to the Russian policy in Crimea,²⁸ about the initiatives of the Republic of Türkiye to resolve the Crimean Tatar issue at the diplomatic level,²⁹ as well as about various projects aimed at providing material assistance to Crimean Tatars.³⁰ The headlines of a Turkish media outlet are also illustrative: “Russian security forces arrested over 50 people in Crimea,”³¹ “Turkey will

²⁵ Yavuz T. Another Crimean Tatar Arrested by Russia: Ukraine // Anadolu Agency. September 8, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/another-crimean-tatar-arrested-by-russia-ukraine/2358938> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²⁶ Yavuz T. ‘Int’l Society Failed to React to Annexation of Crimea’ // Anadolu Agency. March 16, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/intl-society-failed-to-react-to-annexation-of-crimea/2177807> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²⁷ Sajid I. Rights Activist Accuses Russia of ‘Inhuman Tactics’ against Crimean Tatars // Anadolu Agency. June 23, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/rights-activist-accuses-russia-of-inhuman-tactics-against-crimean-tatars/2283245> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²⁸ Kazancı H. Turkey Reiterates Rejection of Crimea’s Annexation // Anadolu Agency. March 16, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-reiterates-rejection-of-crimeas-annexation/2177783> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

²⁹ Aydoğan M. Turkey Calls for Diplomacy to Resolve Crimea Issue // Anadolu Agency. August 23, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/turkey-calls-for-diplomacy-to-resolve-crimea-issue/2343701> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³⁰ Kazancı H. Turkey to Build 500 Buildings in Ukraine // Anadolu Agency. April 11, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkey-to-build-500-buildings-in-ukraine-/2204916> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³¹ Duz Z. N. Russian Security Forces Arrest More Than 50 People in Crimea // Anadolu Agency. September 5, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/russian->

continue to support Crimean Tatars,”³² “Turkey is concerned about the political trials and arrests of Tatars,”³³ “Turkey rejects the annexation of Crimea,”³⁴ “Report shows violation of Crimean Tatars’ rights by Russia,”³⁵ “Turkey calls to investigate the death of a Crimean Tatar.”³⁶

It should be stressed that the modern ideology of Türkiye’s foreign policy is a triune system based on neo-Ottomanism, pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism. In this system, the Crimean Tatar issue is one of the key elements to influence the geopolitical positions of the Russian Federation in the Black Sea region in the field of realpolitik. At the same time, using the rhetoric of protecting human rights and the interests of national minorities, Ankara subjects Russia’s foreign policy image to considerable criticism at various international platforms, including the UN General Assembly. In contrast to this criticism, Türkiye automatically becomes the protector of the peoples of the entire “Turkic world”, positioning itself as the leader of all Muslims, creating a new “more just world order.”³⁷

security-forces-arrest-more-than-50-people-in-crimea/2355679 (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³² Aliyev J. ‘Turkey to Continue to Stand by Crimean Tatars’ // Anadolu Agency. May 18, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-to-continue-to-stand-by-crimean-tatars/2245602> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³³ Dağ B. Turkey Concerned by Political Trials, Arrest of Tatars // Anadolu Agency. March 13, 2021. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-concerned-by-political-trials-arrest-of-tatars/2174571> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³⁴ Kazancı H. Turkey Not to Recognize Annexation of Crimea // Anadolu Agency. June 7, 2018. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/turkey-not-to-recognize-annexation-of-crimea/1168886> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³⁵ Report Shows Russian Violation of Crimean Tatars’ Rights // Anadolu Agency. June 16, 2015. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/report-shows-russian-violation-of-crimean-tatars-rights/36012> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³⁶ Turkey Urges Investigation into Death of Crimean Tatar // Anadolu Agency. March 19, 2014. URL: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkey/turkey-urges-investigation-into-death-of-crimean-tatar/173391> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

³⁷ Speech by the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan [Выступление президента Турецкой Республики г-на Реджепа Тайипа Эрдогана] // UN. September 24, 2019. P. 23—30. (In Russian). URL: <https://undocs.org/ru/A/74/PV.3> (accessed: 02.11.2021).

Ukrainian Policy towards the Crimean Tatars

The reunification of Crimea with Russia provoked a new level of mainstreaming of the Crimean Tatar agenda and the use of Crimean Tatars as an element in the system of countering the reintegration of Crimea into the geopolitical space of the Russian Federation. Conventionally, Ukrainian mechanisms of influence in relation to this ethnic group can be divided into three main directions:

— demonstration of the solution of the Crimean Tatar issue at the legislative level after the 2014 “Crimean spring.” The maximum political manoeuvring in this direction comes down to Ukrainian elite’s promises of the prospect of acquiring the national autonomy status, which may in turn develop into the construction of a nation state in Crimea;

— interaction with members of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People to destabilize the situation in the peninsula;

— formation of an information system on “discrimination” of the Crimean Tatar people by the Russian authorities.

The monitoring of the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada (VR) website database showed that 34 documents mentioning the Crimean Tatars were published from 2014 to the present. Of interest is the fact that 39 documents were published from 1991 to 2014 (Fig. 2).

However, the content of the earlier documents differs significantly from the Ukrainian laws, decrees, and regulations, which were adopted after 2014. In the Ukrainian period of Crimean history, the documents concerning the economic (allocation of funds for the settlement of Crimean Tatars) and cultural spheres prevailed. The exception is the 1999 decree of L.D. Kuchma on the Council of the Crimean Tatars Representatives under the President of Ukraine. This structure was used quite effectively by him to establish control over the Crimean Tatar political elite.³⁸

³⁸ Decree of the President of Ukraine “On the Council of Representatives of the Crimean Tatar People” // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Указ Президента України «Про Раду представників кримськотатарського народу» // Верховна Рада України]. August 26, 2010. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/518/99#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021). See also: (Demeshko, 2018, p. 88).

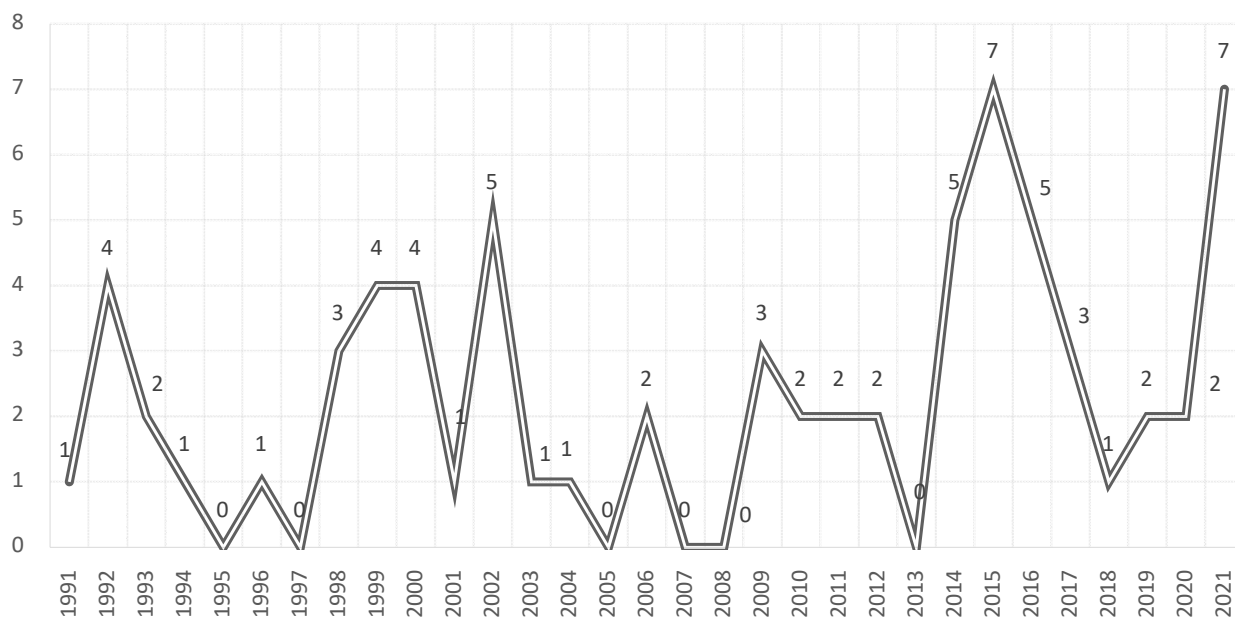


Fig. 2. Dynamics of Document Publications on Crimean Tatar Agenda in the Legislation of Ukraine Database, 1991—2021

Source: compiled by the authors based on the data: Legislation of Ukraine // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. The Parliament of Ukraine official website [Законодавство України // Верховна Рада України. Офіційний вебпортал парламенту України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws> (accessed: 04.11.2021).

The study of the Ukrainian legal framework of 2014—2021 in relation to the Crimean Tatars allows to identify the innovations that were adopted exclusively after the restoration of Russian jurisdiction over Crimea:

1. Crimean Tatars, Karaites and Krymchaks are recognized as indigenous peoples of Ukraine. According to the law of 2021, members of these national groups have broad cultural, economic, educational, and linguistic rights in Ukraine.³⁹

2. Ukraine annually celebrates the Day of Fighting for the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People⁴⁰ and the Day of Remembrance of the

³⁹ Law of Ukraine “On Indigenous Peoples of Ukraine” // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Закон України «Про корінні народи України» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1616-20#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴⁰ Decree of the President of Ukraine “On the Day of Struggle for the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People” // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Указ Президента України «Про День боротьби за права кримськотатарського народу» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/472/2014#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

“Genocide of the Crimean Tatar People” on May 18.⁴¹

3. The 1944 deportation of the Crimean Tatars is recognized as “genocide of the Crimean Tatar people.”⁴²

4. The post of Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for the Affairs of the Crimean Tatar People was established.⁴³

5. Amendments were made to the Regulation on the Council of the Crimean Tatar

⁴¹ Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine “On recognition of the genocide of the Crimean Tatar People” // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Постанова Верховної Ради України «Про визнання геноциду кримськотатарського народу» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/792-19#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Decree of the President of Ukraine “On the Plenipotentiary of the President of Ukraine in the Affairs of the Crimean Tatar People” // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Указ Президента України «Про Уповноваженого Президента України у справах кримськотатарського народу» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/656/2014#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

People,⁴⁴ namely the connection of this structure with the Mejlis was established. For instance, the Head of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People is appointed Chairman of the Council and he also approves the members of the Council.⁴⁵

6. The development of draft laws of Ukraine and laws and regulations regarding national minorities should be carried out through consultations with the Mejlis.⁴⁶

In addition to these innovations, to build communication with this organization, the Ukrainian elite provides its members with positions at various levels of government. From 2014 to 2019, the former Chairman of the banned in the Russian Federation Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People M. Dzhemilev served as Commissioner for the Affairs of the Crimean Tatar People.⁴⁷ His main function was to advocate the constitutional rights of this ethnic

group. Representatives of the Mejlis also receive deputy seats in the VR of Ukraine (Demeshko, 2020, pp. 170—171).

Of interest is the fact that despite all the flirtations of the Ukrainian political elite with the Crimean Tatars after 2014, the limits of such political manoeuvres also became apparent, as the former Ukrainian president P. Poroshenko never fulfilled his promise to create the Crimean Tatar autonomy (Grosfeld & Kharabuga, 2017, p. 58).

The next feature of Ukraine's policy is its desire to demonstrate the "oppressed" position of the Crimean Tatars in the Russian Federation. This approach is implemented to a greater extent through the activities of the Ministry of Information Policy of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, non-profit organizations and the media.

These structures hold events and information projects⁴⁸ devoted to Crimean issues and the protection of human rights on the peninsula.⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that the Ukrainian media, as well as reports of human rights NGOs, constantly feature examples of "violations" of the rights of Crimean Tatars and the "destruction" of their cultural heritage (Demeshko, 2020, pp. 179—180). And criminal cases against representatives of this ethnic group and Ukrainian radicals are interpreted exclusively as persecution of citizens for political reasons. However, the objective reason for their detention was the involvement of these people in the activities of Hizb ut-Tahrir (Grosfeld &

⁴⁴ Decree of the President of Ukraine "On Regulations on the Council of Representatives of the Crimean Tatar People" // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Указ Президента України «Про Положення про Раду представників кримськотатарського народу» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/573/2000#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴⁵ Decree of the President of Ukraine "Issues of the Council of Representatives of the Crimean Tatar People" // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Указ Президента України «Питання Ради представників кримськотатарського народу» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/194/2015#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴⁶ Resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On the Statement of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Regarding the Guarantee of the Rights of the Crimean Tatar People as Part of the Ukrainian State" // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Постанова Верховної Ради України «Про Заяву Верховної Ради України щодо гарантії прав кримськотатарського народу у складі Української Держави» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1140-18> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴⁷ Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 278/2019 "On the Release of M. Dzhemilev from the Performance of the Duties of the Plenipotentiary of the President of Ukraine for the Affairs of the Crimean Tatar People" // Official website of the President of Ukraine [Указ Президента України № 278/2019 «Про увільнення М. Джемільєва від виконання обов'язків Уповноваженого Президента України у справах кримськотатарського народу» // Президент України. Офіційне інтернет-представництво]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/2782019-27045> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴⁸ The Exhibition "Stolen Crimea. History of Deportation" to the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Crimean Tatar Genocide // Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine [Виставка «Вкрадений Крим. Історія депортації» до Дня пам'яті жертв геноциду кримських татар // Міністерство культури та інформаційної політики України]. May 20, 2019. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://mkip.gov.ua/gallery/178.html> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁴⁹ The Ministry of Information Policy Will Support the Project on the Protection of the Rights of the Crimean Tatars // Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine [Міністерство інформаційної політики підтримує проєкт щодо захисту прав кримських татар // Міністерство культури та інформаційної політики України]. October 6, 2015. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://mkip.gov.ua/ru/news/684.html> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

Kharabuga, 2017, p. 61). The reconstruction of the Bakhchisarai Khan's Palace is also interpreted exclusively in a negative way and is positioned by the Ukrainian media as a deliberate "destruction" of Crimean Tatar culture.⁵⁰

Along with the formation of perceptions of "discrimination" against Crimean Tatars in the peninsula, Ukraine seeks to demonstrate the continuity of Russian policy toward Crimean Tatars with the national policies of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. The Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance makes a significant contribution to the formation of negative image of the joint history of Russia and Crimean Tatars (Malinovs'ka, 2019, p. 46). Other organizations also work to distort the historical past of Russia and Crimean Tatars. For instance, the Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies, together with the QHA News Agency and the Kuresh, Crimean Tatar Center for Culture and Sports, implemented a cultural project, "Crimea and the South of Ukraine — the Space of Cultures," which aims to destroy the "myth of 'Novorossia'".⁵¹ The authors of this project consider this term an "artificially imposed" notion, which is allegedly used for the expansion of the "Russian world" and destabilization of the situation in Ukraine.

Kiev mainstreams the problem of "discrimination" against the Crimean Tatar people not only at the domestic level, but also internationally. Since 2014, the Verkhovna Rada has regularly appealed to the UN, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and individual representatives of the international community regarding "violations of the rights and freedoms"

⁵⁰ Shutkevich O. Cultural Heritage: Annexed, Lost, Stolen // Day [Шуткевич О. Культурна спадщина: анексована, втрачена, розкрадена // День]. October 31, 2018. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://day.kyiv.ua/uk/article/den-ukrayiny/kulturna-spadshchyna-aneksovana-vtrachena-rozkradena> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁵¹ "Crimea and the South of Ukraine — the Space of Cultures": A New Cultural Project was Presented in Kyiv [«Крым и Юг Украины — пространство культуры»: в Киеве презентовали новый культурный проект] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. October 24, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/politika/krim-i-yug-ukraini-prostranstvo-kultur-v-kieve-prezentovali-novii-kulturnii-proekt/196017/> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

of Crimean Tatars by the Russian Federation (Demeshko, 2020, pp. 165—166, 176—178).

In 2021, Ukraine reached a new level of internationalization of the Crimean Tatar issue. In February of that year, V.A. Zelensky decreed to establish and approve the composition of the organizing committee in charge of preparation and holding of the Crimean Platform summit in Ukraine.⁵² It is noteworthy that in addition to organizational issues, the presidential decree contains instructions for the "development" of the Crimean Tatar language, namely to adopt an alphabet based on the Latin script, which is also one of the elements of weakening the cultural ties between Russia and Crimean Tatars. The Crimean Platform organizing committee is also of interest. It consisted of 14 people, three of whom were representatives of the Crimean Tatar people.

The summit opened on August 23, 2021. Representatives from 46 states and international organizations took part in the summit.⁵³ The Crimean Tatar agenda was one of the key issues at the event. This was evidenced by the location of the topics of panel discussions, their titles, as well as the functioning of the official platform website in three languages: Ukrainian, English and Crimean Tatar.

For example, the first topic of the discussion was directly related to the Crimean Tatars and the organizers gave it rather a "strong", in terms of semantics, title: "Colonization of the 21st century: overcoming the consequences and restoring the rights of the Crimean Tatar people as a tool for

⁵² Decree of the President of Ukraine "On Separate Measures Aimed at Deoccupation and Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol" // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Указ Президента України «Про окремі заходи, спрямовані на деокупацію та реінтеграцію тимчасово окупованої території Автономної Республіки Крим та міста Севастополя» // Верховна Рада України]. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/78/2021#Text> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁵³ Yurchenko E. Crimean Platform Summit: In Kiev High Delegations Discussed the Return of Crimea Under the Control of Ukraine // Crimea. Realities [Юрченко Е. Саммит «Крымская платформа»: в Киеве высокие делегации обсуждали возвращение Крыма под контроль Украины // Крым. Реалии]. August 24, 2021. (In Russian). URL: <https://ru.krymr.com/a/sammit-krymskaya-platforma-kiev/31423612.html> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

de-occupation of Crimea.” During the second discussion, “Reintegration of Crimea: through protection of human rights and sustainable development,” the issues of “human rights violations” on the peninsula, “discrimination” of Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars by the Russian authorities were also discussed. The opening of the Crimean Platform summit with a song performed by a Crimean Tatar singer about the Crimean Tatars deportation was also symbolic.⁵⁴

Since 2021, the Crimean Platform has been one of the key foreign policy instruments of Ukraine to consolidate international efforts aimed at the “de-occupation” of Crimea.⁵⁵ In this matter, the Ukrainian leadership relies on the Crimean Tatar question and “oppression” of the rights of Crimean Tatars and Ukrainians.

So, after the “Crimean spring” Ukraine has been using the Crimean Tatar agenda in every possible way to attract the international community’s attention to the Crimean issue and to restore its jurisdiction over Crimea. At the same time, Ukraine’s actions to resolve the Crimean Tatar question are more of a manipulative nature, because the Ukrainian political elite began taking steps to address the Crimean Tatar agenda at the very moment when the peninsula became part of the Russian Federation. A similar imitation policy is being pursued in relation to the entire Crimea. This is evidenced by the creation by the Ukrainian political leadership of the executive agencies of Crimea, supposedly responsible for the implementation of Ukrainian policy on the peninsula (Bredikhin, 2017, p. 41). However, such agencies do not really work for obvious reasons.

Crimean Tatars as a “Bridge of Friendship” between Türkiye and Ukraine

The importance of the Crimean Tatar factor in Turkish-Ukrainian cooperation after 2014 is

⁵⁴ Crimean Gatherings [Крымские посиделки] // Lenta.ru. August 25, 2021. (In Russian). URL: https://lenta.ru/articles/2021/08/25/krym_plat/ (accessed: 03.11.2021).

⁵⁵ Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 117/2021 // Official website of the President of Ukraine [Указ Президента України № 117/2021 // Президент України. Офіційне інтернет-представництво]. March 11, 2021. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/1172021-37533> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

confirmed by joint projects, the main recipients of which are Crimean Tatars. The monitoring of the legal framework and media materials showed that the main areas of cooperation between Türkiye and Ukraine on the Crimean Tatar question are:

1. “Protection” of the rights of the Crimean Tatars.
2. Humanitarian aid to the Crimean Tatars by the Republic of Türkiye.
3. Projects in the sphere of culture and education.

The Republic of Türkiye does not limit itself solely to the verbal format of “protecting” the rights of the Crimean Tatars, but also takes concrete steps in this direction. For example, in 2017, R.T. Erdoğan played a key role in the release of I. Umerov and A. Chygoz, Deputy Heads of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People. A criminal case was opened against the former for public call for violation of the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. As for A. Chygoz, he was accused of organizing mass riots at a rally on February 26, 2014, on the eve of the referendum on the accession of Crimea to the Russian Federation.⁵⁶ It is also noteworthy that it was R.T. Erdoğan who was approached by V. Zelensky⁵⁷ and M. Dzhemilev, the so-called “leader” of the Crimean Tatar people, the famous dissident and former chairman of the Mejlis, regarding the release of Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar activists.⁵⁸ It should be noted that the

⁵⁶ Umerov and Chygoz Met with Erdoğan [Умеров и Чийгоз встретились с Эрдоганом] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. October 26, 2017. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/obschestvo/umerov-i-chiigoz-vstretilis-s-erdoganom/181197/> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁵⁷ The President of Ukraine Held a Telephone Conversation with the President of the Republic of Türkiye // Official website of the President of Ukraine [Президент України провів телефонну розмову з Президентом Турецької Республіки // Президент України. Офіційне інтернет-представництво]. August 22, 2021. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/ru/news/prezident-ukrayini-proviv-telefonnu-rozmovu-z-prezidentom-tu-70245> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁵⁸ Erdoğan Personally Told Me That He Would Do Everything Possible — Dzhemilev on the Release of Political Prisoners // Public [Эрдоган мне лично сказал, что сделает все возможное, — Джемилев об освобождении политзаключенных // Громадське]. October 24, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <https://hromadske.ua/ru/posts/erdohan-mne-lychno-skazal-chto-sdelat-vse-vozmozhnoe->

Mejlis and M. Dzhemilev are rather highly respected in Türkiye. This is actively used by the Ukrainian side to establish effective communication with Ankara. So representatives of this organization are regularly included in Ukrainian delegations for negotiations with the Republic of Türkiye.

In addition, Türkiye has consistently supported Ukrainian initiatives aimed at mainstreaming of Crimean Tatars' rights. For example, in April 2021, the presidents of the two states signed a declaration following the ninth meeting of the High-Level Strategic Council.⁵⁹ This document clearly states that Türkiye supports the creation of the previously mentioned Crimean Platform. Moreover, the countries intend to strengthen joint actions to improve the living conditions of the Crimean Tatars who left the peninsula due to its supposedly “temporary occupation.” This task is currently being addressed through a framework agreement between the governments of Ukraine and Türkiye on cooperation in housing construction.⁶⁰ Under the agreement, Türkiye will assist Ukraine in the construction of 500 apartments in Kiev, Nikolaev and Kherson. There are 450 apartments for the Crimean Tatars, while the rest will be given to people entitled to benefits.

In addition, Türkiye has consistently supported Ukrainian initiatives aimed at

actualizing the rights of Crimean Tatars. Thus, in April 2021, the presidents of the two countries signed a declaration following the ninth meeting of the High-Level Strategic Council. In this document it is clearly stated that Türkiye supports the creation of the previously mentioned “Crimean platform.” Moreover, the states intend to strengthen joint actions to improve the living conditions of the Crimean Tatars, who left the peninsula as a result of its alleged “temporary occupation.” This task is currently being addressed through a framework agreement between the governments of Ukraine and Türkiye on cooperation in housing construction. Under the terms of the agreement, Türkiye will assist Ukraine in the construction of 500 apartments in Kiev, Nikolaev and Kherson.

Ankara, appealing to the need to assist the Crimean Tatars, is also active in Ukraine, using “soft power” and thus promoting Turkish culture. This direction of Turkish policy is implemented through the activities of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), the Yunus Emre Cultural Center, the Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMF).

After the end of the Cold War, the Turkish leadership began to apply new methods of promoting its foreign policy. In January 1992, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) was established. Since 1994, this structure has overseen almost all “donor” projects of the Republic of Türkiye (Akıllı & Çelenk, 2019). The main activities of TİKA have not changed, but after 2014 all projects have been implemented exclusively in Ukraine (Irkhin & Demeshko, 2019). Since Crimea's reunification with Russia, TİKA has opened the Crimean Tatar Cultural Center,⁶¹ I. Gasprinsky Research Center,⁶² the

dzhemilev-ob-osvobozhdenyy-polytzakliuchennykh (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁵⁹ Joint Declaration of the 9th Meeting of the High-Level Strategic Council between Ukraine and the Republic of Turkey // Official website of the President of Ukraine [Спільна декларація Дев'ятого засідання Стратегічної ради високого рівня між Україною та Турецькою Республікою // Президент України. Офіційне інтернет-представництво]. April 10, 2021. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/spilna-deklaraciya-devyatogo-zasidannya-strategichnoyi-radi-67909> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁶⁰ Framework Agreement between the Government of Ukraine and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye on Cooperation in the Field of Housing Construction for Representatives of the Crimean Tatar People and Privileged Categories of Citizens of Ukraine // Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [Рамкова Угода між Урядом України та Урядом Турецької Республіки про співробітництво у сфері будівництва житла для представників кримськотатарського народу та пільгових категорій громадян України // Верховна Рада]. (In Ukrainian). URL: https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/792_001-21#n2 (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁶¹ Dzhemilev and TİKA Opened the Crimean Tatar Cultural Center [Джемилев и ТІКА открыли крымскотатарский культурный центр] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. October 22, 2016. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/photo/djemilev-i-tika-otkrili-krimskotatarskii-kulturnii-tsentr/28489/#1> (accessed: 04.11.2021).

⁶² The First Lady of Turkey Opened a Research Center Named after Gasprinsky // Islam in Ukraine [Первая леди Турции открыла исследовательский центр имени Гаспринского // Ислам в Украине]. October 10, 2017. (In Russian). URL: <https://islam.in.ua/ru/novosti-v-strane/pervaya-ledi-turcii-otkrila-issledovatel'skiy-centr-imeni-gasprinskogo> (accessed: 04.11.2021).

Center for Research on the History of Turkish and Crimean Tatar Peoples,⁶³ the House of Tatar Culture in Kiev,⁶⁴ and the Institute of Oriental Studies at Taurida National V.I. Vernadsky University.⁶⁵ In addition, TİKA provided material assistance to pre-school and secondary educational institutions,⁶⁶ as well as to individual Crimean Tatar families.⁶⁷

Since its inception in 2009, Yunus Emre Institute has made an important contribution to the promotion of Turkish language and culture abroad. A branch of this organization also operates in Kiev. The Institute conducts Turkish language courses and organizes hundreds of concerts, exhibitions, competitions, film festivals, scientific and other events each year. Also, the activities of the cultural center in Kiev are clearly aimed at forming a negative interpretation of the history of Russia and Crimean Tatars. In 2019, this organization held an event dedicated to the activities of the Crimean Tatar writer, public figure, one of the leaders and ideologists of the national liberation movement of Crimean Tatars, C. Seydahmet Kırımer, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the M.A. Sulkevich government, supported by the German military command during the Civil War. Later, Kırımer emigrated to Türkiye and did not

stop writing and speaking about the “oppression” of Crimean Tatars and other “enslaved” peoples in the Soviet Union until the end of his days.⁶⁸

The Turkish Maarif Foundation was founded in June 2016, one month before the attempted military coup by the Gülenist Terrorist Organization “Parallel State Structure.” Initially, TMV focused its efforts on bringing educational structures opened by Gülen supporters under its control. In 2021, Türkiye and Ukraine signed an agreement to support the organization’s work in Ukraine.⁶⁹ At the moment, the Foundation is the main tool for exporting Turkish education to foreign countries.

Thus, for Türkiye, the Crimean Tatars are a Turkic factor in both Ukraine and Russia and an opportunity to exert a significant influence on the balance of power in the Black Sea region. It is noteworthy that representatives of Ukrainian political elite also support such rhetoric. For example, Ukrainian Deputy Foreign Minister, E. Dzhepar (a Crimean Tatar by birth), repeatedly declared “historical ties” between the two states and noted that “Ukraine is an heir to Turkish culture. Crimean Tatars are a bridge between Ukraine and Turkey.”⁷⁰

⁶³ The History of the Turkish and Crimean Tatar Peoples Will Be Studied at the Center at the Kiev National University [Историю турецкого и крымскотатарского народов будут исследовать в Центре при КНУ] // Qırım Haber Ajansı. October 19, 2018. (In Russian). URL: <http://old.qha.com.ua/ru/photo/istoriyu-turetskogo-i-krimskotatarskogo-narodov-budut-issledovat-v-tsentre-pri-knu/30441/#1> (accessed: 04.11.2021).

⁶⁴ Turkey Keeps Breaking Records in Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance // TİKA. URL: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/turkey_keeps_breaking_records_in_humanitarian_aid_and_development_assistance-49351 (accessed: 04.11.2021).

⁶⁵ An Oriental Studies Institute Was Established in Ukraine’s Taurida National University // TİKA. URL: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/an_oriental_studies_institute_was_established_in_ukraine%27s_taurida_national_university-48706 (accessed: 04.11.2021).

⁶⁶ TİKA Supports the Education Infrastructure of Ukraine // TİKA. URL: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/tika_supports_the_education_infrastructure_of_ukraine-61416 (accessed: 04.11.2021).

⁶⁷ Erenler Sofrası Reaches 1,500 Families in Ukraine // TİKA. URL: https://www.tika.gov.tr/en/news/erenler_sofrasi_reaches_1_500_families_in_ukraine-62863 (accessed: 04.11.2021).

⁶⁸ In Kyiv, at the Yunus Emre Institute, One of the Ideologists of the National Liberation Movement of the Crimean Tatars Jafer Seydamet was Remembered // Islam in Ukraine [В Києві в Інституті Юнуса Емре вшанували одного з ідеологів національно-освободительного руху кримських татар Джафера Сейдамета // Ислам в Україні]. April 24, 2019. (In Russian). URL: <https://islam.in.ua/ru/novosti-v-strane/v-kieve-v-institute-yunusa-emre-vspominali-odnogo-iz-ideologov-nacionalno> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁶⁹ Joint Declaration of the 9th Meeting of the High-Level Strategic Council between Ukraine and the Republic of Turkey // Official website of the President of Ukraine [Спільна декларація Дев’ятого засідання Стратегічної ради високого рівня між Україною та Турецькою Республікою // Президент України. Офіційне інтернет-представництво]. April 10, 2021. (In Ukrainian). URL: <https://www.president.gov.ua/news/spilna-deklaraciya-devyatogo-zasidannya-strategichnoyi-radi-67909> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

⁷⁰ It Became Known about the Accession of Ukraine to the Turkic Countries // Ukraine.ru [Стало известно о присоединении Украины к тюркским странам // Украина.ру]. October 8, 2021. (In Russian). URL: <https://ukraina.ru/news/20211008/1032426545.html> (accessed: 01.11.2021).

Conclusion

The research conducted allows us to come to the following conclusions.

First, Türkiye's practices with regard to the Crimean Tatar people can be characterized as a policy of double standards. This point is confirmed by the national policy of the Republic of Türkiye, which is more aimed at the acculturation and assimilation of representatives of other national groups living in Türkiye. At the same time, internationally, the leadership of the Justice and Development Party positions itself as a “defender” of all Muslims in the world, including the Crimean Tatars. The ambivalent nature of Ankara's actions is also evident in its interaction with both the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People and pro-Russian representatives of Crimean Tatars. Given the heterogeneity and polarity of political preferences of the Crimean Tatar ethnos, Türkiye is probably taking these steps to maintain its influence in the Crimean Tatar environment and strengthen its position both at the domestic and international levels.

Second, Ukraine views the Crimean Tatar issue as one of the most significant elements in the system of countering the reintegration of Crimea and Sevastopol into the Russian Federation. At the same time, to destabilize the situation in Crimea, the Ukrainian leadership relies on interaction with the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People. However, the political alliance of the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar political elites is situational and, apparently, not long-term, because the simultaneous existence of two nationalist projects is possible if there is a common external enemy, which Russia is declared to be.

Third, a characteristic feature of Turkish-Ukrainian cooperation on the Crimean Tatar agenda is constructing a negative image of Russia through discrediting its actions with regard to Crimean Tatars. Moreover, Ankara and Kiev form ideas about a kind of continuity between the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation in “violating” the rights of this ethnic group. At the same time, the conditional Turkish-Ukrainian alliance positions itself as a “protector” of the Crimean Tatars from the “Russian aggression.”

Fourth, the Crimean Tatar agenda will continue to be played out by Türkiye, Ukraine and other states and powers to weaken Russia's position in the Black Sea region. Under these conditions, the political leadership of the Russian Federation at the federal and regional levels must continue to carry out systematic work to integrate Crimean Tatars into the Russian space, taking into account understanding of the technologies of external destructive influence. In this integration mechanism, the first stage requires the development and implementation of integration technologies with a long-term political effect in “challenge-response” logic. The second stage of these mechanisms should leave the logic of responding to destructive external influences and involve a proactive program for the formation of a new all-Russian identity in the context of the Russian leadership's revision of the outcome of the Cold War. At the synthesis level, this mechanism, which has not yet received conceptual and doctrinal formalization in the Russian Federation, already competes with the ideas of the Turkic world (*Türk dünyası*) and the West, which are well formalized at the conceptual and doctrinal level.

Received / Поступила в редакцию: 16.11.2021

Revised / Доработана после рецензирования: 08.10.2022

Accepted / Принята к публикации: 17.10.2022

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