



COUNCIL OF UNITED CIRCASSIA
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To: **Deutscher Bundestag**
Platz der Republik 1,
11011 Berlin, Germany

May 10, 2024

Dear **Members of the German Federal Parliament,**

As the Council of United Circassia, we are writing this appeal to draw your attention to the Circassian Genocide committed by the Russian Empire.

The Russian Empire, during its occupation of Circassia initiated in 1763, systematically carried out brutal practices that led to the death of millions, the separation of hundreds of thousands of families, the destruction of villages and towns by burning, and the devastation of forests and natural habitats. In 1864, when the Circassian Nation was exhausted, a systematic expulsion of who stayed alive of the entire population began, resulting in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives due to disease and famine during the forced exile. Only a small number of Circassians were allowed to remain in their homeland, resulting in more than 90% of the Circassian population being killed or sent into exile. That was not enough for them. Russians destroyed more than 6000 historical and cultural locations to make it easy for them to distort our history and trying to delete our existence on this land. Today, the Circassian Nation is scattered across more than 40 countries around the world. Additionally, the areas vacated by the Circassians were systematically resettled with nations loyal to the Russian Empire from different countries. All this information is clearly included in the reports and historical records prepared by the influential states of the period, England, France and the Ottoman Empire, as well as Russia.

Although 160 years have passed, the pain remains fresh because until this moment we still suffer from genocide that killed our fathers before, and now it is killing our language, culture, identity and our existence in this world. The lack of any effort for fair compensation and correction in favor of the Circassian Nation, despite three different forms of governance in Russia over time (Russian Empire, USSR, Russian Federation), keeps the memories vivid and the sense of injustice intense. However, today the Russian Federation, which is the predecessor of the Russian Empire and is currently governed by someone who has an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for the crime of genocide, continues its imperialist practices. As the OSCE declared in the summer of 2023 (OSCE Vancouver Declaration-2023, Article 14, p. 35), Russia continues its systematic oppression and exploitation practices against nations such as the Circassian Nation, which it holds in captivity. Today, Circassian youth are sentenced to long prison sentences for simple and unfounded accusations, and some of them lose their lives as a result of severe torture in prisons. No matter how this occupying state changes its face and name—Russian Empire, USSR, Russian Federation—its essence and criminal methods remain the same.

If we learned the necessary lessons from the Circassian Genocide - one of the most well-known genocides of the modern era - genocides such as the Holocaust, Holodomor and Srebrenica could have been prevented. If we can describe accurately what the Circassians experienced in



the 19th century, these disgraceful actions of Russia should be officially recorded as "genocide" in the memory of humanity, and we may have a chance to prevent possible genocides in the future. The fact that information about the Circassian Genocide is clearly included in the reports of the influential states of the period and in the books of researchers is not sufficient for the establishment of justice and for humanity to learn the necessary lesson from this genocide. The fact that the Circassian Genocide, which is a stain on humanity, is being held accountable, will give a strong message to future generations about behaving more responsibly on behalf of humanity.

In order to prevent genocide and ensure justice for the victims, the following international documents, which form the basis for protecting human rights and stopping oppression, violence, and injustice globally, must be considered:

- The Hague Convention IV of 18 October 1907 concerning the Laws and Customs of War on Land,
- The Atlantic Charter of 14 August 1941, acknowledging the right of nations to choose their own forms of government,
- The United Nations Charter adopted on 26 June 1945,
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted on 9 December 1948,
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948,
- The Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees adopted on 28 July 1951,
- The European Convention on Human Rights adopted on 3 September 1953,
- The Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples adopted on 14 December 1960,
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination adopted on 21 December 1965,
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted on 16 December 1966,
- The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief adopted on 25 November 1981,
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted on 20 November 1989,
- The Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities adopted on 18 December 1992,
- The resolution condemning the Circassian (Adyghe) Genocide during the years of the Russian-Caucasian War by the Supreme Council of the Kabardino-Balkaria dated 07 February 1992,
- The resolution recognizing the Circassian Genocide and appealing to the Russian Federation by the State Council of the Republic of Adyghea dated 29 April 1996,
- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples adopted on 13 September 2007.
- Other relevant international documents and treaties adopted at the United Nations, the European Union, or regional levels emphasize the need to safeguard human rights and restore violated rights.



For these documents and treaties to truly hold a sincere meaning and be successfully implemented, it is imperative that the Circassian Genocide, one of the darkest chapters in human history, is not ignored by humanity and it must be officially recognized.

The importance of international cooperation and solidarity in order to prevent painful events such as genocide and exile is an undeniable reality. If the Circassian Nation, which heroically defended its homeland against Russian invasions for 101 years, had not been left alone by the international community, the Russians would not have been able to occupy Circassia and would not have reached the power to threaten the whole world and humanity. Because the main factor in Russia's transformation into a superpower is the geo-strategic location on the Black Sea it gained with the occupation of Circassia and the rich underground and surface resources of Circassia. After this long occupation and crimes against our nation we ask again the international community not to leave the Circassian Nation alone in its struggle for existence.

Therefore, as the Council of United Circassia and the individuals, whose names are listed below, we request that the **German Federal Parliament (German Bundestag)** to take the following actions on behalf of humanity:

1. Official recognition of the systematic actions carried out by the Russian Empire in the 18th and 19th centuries to collectively annihilate the Circassian Nation as "genocide" and condemnation the Circassian Genocide explicitly.
2. Official recognition of the Circassian Nation's right to independence, the right to self-determination, the right to re-establish their state in its historical homeland, and the right to compensation for the Circassian Genocide.
3. Taking the necessary steps to bring the investigation and recognition of the Circassian Genocide, carried out by successive Russian governments and regimes during the Caucasus War of 1763-1864, to the relevant international organizations, as well as the International Court of Justice.

Furthermore, we invite you to engage in effective solidarity with the Circassian Nation in addressing issues threatening their existence, language, culture, and identity and ensuring continued existence.

Yours faithfully,

Kenan KAPLAN

Chairman of the Council of United Circassia

Annex:

Name list.

Informative poster about the Circassian Genocide.