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Press Release

Pain still continues for 76 years: Deportation of the Crimean Tatars

76 years ago, today, Crimean Tatar Turks were deported from their homeland Crimea to Siberia and Central Asia on wagons on 18 May 1944. Thousands of Crimean Tatars who were driven out of their homeland overnight in inhumane manner by boarding cattle cars died of thirst, hunger and disease during the journey, while the survivors were forced into exile from their homeland for years. We share the pain of the Crimean Tatars on the 76th anniversary of the 18 May Deportation of the Crimean Tatars and remember those who lost their lives during the exile with mercy and gratitude.

Upon the orders of Stalin on 18 May 1944 in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, all of Crimean Tatars in Crimea were exiled overnight. While the vast majority of Crimean Tatars fought against the German Nazi army alongside the Red Army, 46 percent of Crimean Tatars died upon their journey. Crimean Tatars experienced tremendous losses as a result of the exile which continued until 1989. With the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the majority of Crimean Tatars did return to their homeland Crimea. However, about 20,000 of the 350,000 Crimean Tatars who returned within the 20 years after the dissolution of the USSR were forced to leave Crimea because of the invasion of Crimea by Russia on 26 February 2014.

As a result of the commemoration of the deportation of the Crimean Tatars, commemorations and mourning rallies will be held in Ukraine including in the Crimean Peninsula, as well as in Turkey, Canada, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and the United States, where Crimean Tatars live. As a result of the measures regarding the coronavirus (Covid-19), the deportation of the Crimean Tatars will be commemorated with events which will be mainly held online.

As they are today fighting for their homeland Crimea which is under the occupation of Russia, upon the anniversary of their deportation, we share the pain of all Crimean Tatars represented by the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people (QTMM), our member organization at the Federal Union of European Nationalities (FUEN), and as the Working Group of Turkic Minorities and Communities (TAG) inside the FUEN, we gracefully remember the Crimean Tatars who lost their lives as a result of the deportation.