



Resolution of the People's Assembly Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia

15 October 1997

On the act of deportation of the Abkhazians (Abaza) in the XIX century

The colonial policy of the Russian Empire during the Russian-Caucasian war (1817-1864), and the periods that followed, inflicted irreparable damage on the Abkhazian (Abaza) nation and its genetic fund. For participation in the struggle for the freedom and independence of their country a part of this people was physically exterminated, and 80% of the survivors were expelled to the Ottoman Empire.

As a result of the war, of the repeated punitive measures and of the eviction of the Abkhazians (Abaza) from their historical Homeland, the North-Western and Central Abkhazia were completely devastated, and the ethnographic groups and territorial communities of the Sadz, Ahchypsaa, Aibga, Tsvydjy, Pshwy, Gumaa, Tsabalaa, Dalaa, and others, alongside with the closely related to Abkhazians (Abaza) Ubykhs, who used to inhabit the territory between the rivers Khosta and Shakhe, and the majority of the Abazinians (Abaza), who lived in the North Caucasus, have completely disappeared. The Bzypians, Abzhywans and Samyrzakanians remained in Abkhazia only as separate ethnic enclaves, which is true also for those Tapantas and Ashkharywans who remained in the North Caucasus. Over 300 000 Abkhazians (Abaza), deported in the XIX century, are, according to the current international laws, considered to be refugees.

The deported population experienced innumerable calamities and endured great sufferings, tens of thousands of them became victims of hunger, cold and epidemics. Quite groundlessly, the Tsarist Russia accused the deported Abkhazians in "treason". They were denied the right to return to their Motherland. Thousands of Abkhazians who, despite incredible difficulties, managed to return from Turkey to Abkhazia's shores, were sent back by the local administration. Those Abkhazians who remained in Abkhazia were announced the "guilty" and "temporary" population of the country. They were deprived of the right to settle in Central and coastal parts of Abkhazia and were threatened to be expelled in their entirety even for a slightest anti-governmental protest.

In 1907 the Russian authorities removed from the Abkhazians the insulting for their national dignity label of "guilty", and the status of a "temporary" population, but neither Tsarism, nor the Menshevik regime of the Georgian Democratic Republic (1918-1921), nor the authorities of the Soviet Georgia or the Government of the

Soviet Union solved the problem of repatriation of Abkhazians, and numerous individual and collective appeals of the representatives of the Abkhaz (Abaza) Diaspora to the governments of the aforementioned states with a request to consider the issue of their return to their historical Homeland, as a rule, were left without any response. At the same time, both the Georgian authorities and their patrons in the Kremlin were conducting purposeful complex measures on a mass resettlement of ethnic Georgians from Georgia into Abkhazia and on assimilation of those Abkhazians who remained on their historical Homeland.

Today more than four thousand people from the Abkhazian Diaspora are waiting for an appropriate decision of the Government of the Republic of Abkhazia to their request to repatriate to their historical Homeland that would enable them to preserve their language, national culture, traditions and their national identity as a whole.

Giving the historical, political and legal assessment of the fatal for the Abkhazian (Abaza) people events that occurred in the XIX century, the People's Assembly of the Republic of Abkhazia resolves:

1. To acknowledge the mass extermination and the eviction in the XIX century of the Abkhazians (Abaza) to the Ottoman Empire as genocide: the gravest crime against humanity.
2. In accordance with the Convention of the UN General Assembly of 28 July 1951 to acknowledge the deported in the XIX century Abkhazians (Abaza) as refugees.
3. To acknowledge the inalienable right of the descendants of the deported in the XIX century Abkhazians (Abaza) on voluntary and unimpeded repatriation to their historical Homeland.
4. To appeal to the UN, OSCE, CIS and other international and regional organizations, to the Russian Federation as the legal successor of the Russian Empire and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with a request to render necessary political, financial and humanitarian assistance to the process of voluntary and unimpeded repatriation and integration of the descendants of the deported in the XIX century Abkhazians (Abaza).
5. To entrust the Committee on Legislation and the Commission on Inter-parliamentary Connections and Connections with the Compatriots of the People's Assembly of the Republic of Abkhazia with the elaboration of the draft laws on a planned repatriation of the Abkhazians (Abaza).
6. To recommend to the President and Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic Abkhazia to take into account, while determining and implementing the main directions of internal and foreign policy of the country, an importance for the state of the repatriation of the descendants of the Abkhazian refugees of the XIX century; to adopt a complex programme on repatriation and absorption of the Abkhazians (Abaza) living abroad.
7. To appeal to all republican and local governmental administrative bodies, political parties, public organizations, economical and commercial structures with a request to provide with necessary political, moral, psychological and financial assistance to the process of repatriation of the Abkhazians (Abaza).
8. To publish this Resolution in the press and broadcast it on radio and television.

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Speaker of the People's Assembly
Parliament of the Republic of Abkhazia
City of Sukhum
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