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## AÇLIKQIRIM-GENOCIDE OF CRIMEAN TATAR NATION 1921-1923

### *Introduction*

Following the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917, Crimean Tatars restored their statehood by proclaiming the Crimean Nation's Republic.<sup>1</sup> However, in 1918, Bolshevik Russia committed a renewed occupation of Crimea, which marked the beginning of four waves of genocide, each with its own *dolus specialis*—the specific intent to destroy, in whole or in part, the Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnic, racial, and religious group, and to effect the complete denationalization of Crimea.

In this study, we will examine the AçlıkQırım-genocide<sup>2</sup> (in Crimean Tatar: Açlık — starvation, Qırım — Crimea), as documented in Soviet archival records, contemporaneous accounts by Soviet officials including Mirsaid Sultan-Galiyev, and subsequent historical scholarship. As a precursor to the AçlıkQırım-genocide,

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<sup>1</sup> Russia deliberately refers to peoples within the Russian Empire as "people's" (*narodnaya*), avoiding the term "national" (*natsionalnaya*) to erase the autochthonous status of indigenous peoples and their right to self-determination. Thus, all republics were designated as "People's" rather than "National," including the Ukrainian one. During its invasion of Ukraine, Russia employed the thesis that the Ukrainian nation never existed and that Ukrainians were allegedly "created by Lenin."

<https://time.com/6150046/ukraine-statehood-russia-history-putin/> This thesis explains the deliberate use of the term "people" (*narod*) instead of "nation" (*natsiya*). This instrument was applied to all Turkic peoples, including those who possessed statehood prior to the Russian Empire—such as the Crimean Khanate, which existed as a sovereign state for over three centuries (1441–1783).

<sup>2</sup> AçlıkQırım 1921-1923: Legal Qualification of the Genocide of Crimean Tatar Nation under International Law, 2025.

<https://crimeantatarfoundation.org/aclik-qirim-1921-1923-legal-qualification-of-the-genocide-of-crimean-tatar-nation-under-international-law/>; Z.Mustafaieva, 2025. Artificial Famine as an Instrument of Demographic Engineering: Structural Violence Against the Crimean Tatar People in 1921-1923.

[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389893762\\_Artificial\\_Famine\\_as\\_an\\_Instrument\\_of\\_Demographic\\_Engineering\\_Structural\\_Violence\\_Against\\_the\\_Crimean\\_Tatar\\_People\\_in\\_1921-1923/references](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/389893762_Artificial_Famine_as_an_Instrument_of_Demographic_Engineering_Structural_Violence_Against_the_Crimean_Tatar_People_in_1921-1923/references)

the communist totalitarian regime employed mechanisms to liquidate the Crimean Tatar national Liberation Movement, which included shootings, burning alive, terror, drowning, and so forth. In addition, repressions were committed against Crimean Tatar intelligentsia, military personnel, and participants in the national liberation movement. The means of suppressing Crimean Tatar resistance included blocking Crimea, forcibly isolating the Crimea peninsula, total confiscation of food resources, destruction of traditional sources of livelihood and means of production, and falsification of statistics to block international aid.<sup>3</sup>

This study analyzes data recorded by Soviet authorities documenting: out of 100,000 murder victims of the total population of Crimea, 76,000<sup>4</sup> fatalities caused by violence were specifically Crimean Tatars. Statistical data prove that the murder victims rate for all other ethnic groups combined was 4.05%, while for Crimean Tatars it was 35.02%. This proves selectivity of intent by a factor of 8.65, with deliberate deprivation of life for the purpose of complete or partial destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group. With a total population of 217,000<sup>5</sup> persons (26.8%) of the peninsula's population, they accounted for 76% of all murder victims. This disproportion constitutes mathematical proof of special intent (*dolus specialis*),<sup>6</sup> since the probability that such extraordinary selectivity (8.65:1) occurred by random is practically zero ( $p < 0.0001$ ). Statistical data exclude natural causes and demonstrate the deliberate creation of ethnically differentiated, targeted conditions. Such selectivity corresponds to Article II(a),(b),(c),(d),(e) of the 1948 Genocide Convention.

A comprehensive study of the AqlıkQırım-genocide of 1921-1923 must take into account the consequences of the renewed occupation of Crimea in 1918-1989. The Crimean Nation's Republic was the state of Crimean Tatars, which exercised the right to self-determination on its autochthonous territory. The communist totalitarian regime destroyed Crimean Tatars as a national group according to Article II of the 1948 Convention.

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<sup>3</sup> Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, adopted by U.N. General Assembly resolution 260 A (III) on 9 December 1948, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-prevention-and-punishment-crime-genocide>.

<sup>4</sup> This critically important statistic is based on the analysis of the Crimean CEC documents and demographic studies, and will be examined in detail in the main body of the work. The disproportional scale of losses is among the most important proofs of the 1921–1923 genocide.

<sup>5</sup> Гульнара Бекірова, Андрій Іванець, Юлія Тищенко, Сергій Громенко, та Бекір Аблаєв, *Історія Криму та кримськотатарського народу: Навчальний посібник [History of Crimea and the Crimean Tatar People: A Textbook]* (Київ: «Кримська родина»; «Майстер Книг», 2020), 115, [https://crimeantatarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Istoriia\\_Krymu\\_ta\\_krymskotatarskoho\\_narodu.pdf](https://crimeantatarfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/Istoriia_Krymu_ta_krymskotatarskoho_narodu.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> ICTY, *Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić*, Judgment (Trial Chamber), August 2, 2001, §571, 224, <https://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/tjug/en/krs-tj010802e.pdf>; ICTR, *Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu* (ICTR-96-4), Judgment (Trial Chamber), §§498, 112–13.

In autumn 1920, the secret directive of the Chairman of the VChK F.E. Dzerzhinsky No. 514/s dated November 16, 1920, addressed to the head of the Special Department of the Southwestern and Southern Fronts V.N. Mantsev, documents the special intent (*dolus specialis*) for the isolation of the peninsula: "Take all measures so that not a single White Guardist passes from Crimea to the mainland. Deal with them according to the instructions I gave you in Moscow. It will be the greatest misfortune of the Republic if they manage to seep through. No one from the population and no White Guardist should be allowed to pass from Crimea,"<sup>7</sup> which constitutes direct evidence of intent to create conditions calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group, per Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention. The Chairman of the Soviet administration of Crimea Béla Kun publicly confirmed these intentions: "Crimea is a bottle from which no counterrevolutionary will escape."<sup>8</sup> This forced isolation of the population transformed the peninsula into a genocidal cauldron. American researcher Donald Rayfield<sup>9</sup> documents the implementation of this strategy: "There was a mass exodus, though not of Crimean Tatars. In November 1920, followed by the ruthless massacre by the Bolshevik Cheka (soon to be called the GPU), which more than decimated the rest of the population."

The coordination of actions by the highest officials of the totalitarian communist regime —Dzerzhinsky's written directive on total blockade of Crimea and Béla Kun's public statement about the "bottle"—constitutes official documentary confirmation of genocide.

The AqlıkQırım-genocide of 1921-1923 was perpetrated under the direct leadership of V.I. Lenin (Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars), F.E. Dzerzhinsky (Chairman of the VChK), with the participation of J.V. Stalin (People's Commissar for Nationalities) and was executed by the leadership for coordinating mass destruction in Crimea (under the euphemistic name "Extraordinary Troika") consisting of Béla Kun (Chairman of the Soviet administration of Crimea), Rozalia Zemlyachka (Responsible Secretary of the Crimean Regional Committee of the RCP(b)), Georgy Pyatakov (member of the Crimean Soviet Committee), and Yuri Larin a founder of the system of food confiscation that disproportionately targeted Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnic, and religious group (under the euphemistic name "prodrazvyorstka"). General oversight was exercised by S.M. Kirov (Plenipotentiary Representative of the

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<sup>7</sup> РДАСП. Ф. 76. Оп. 3. Д. 138. Л. 1.; Григоров, Александр Игоревич, составитель. *Крымская Книга Памяти Великой войны 1914-1918 годов. Том I*. [Место издания]: ООО МИД, 2014. 860 с. ISBN 5-85167-059-2.

<sup>8</sup> Мельгунов С.П. Красный террор в России 1918-1923 гг. М: Айрис-Пресс, 2006. — с.113

<sup>9</sup> Rayfield, "A Seditious and Sinister Tribe," 290.

Council of People's Commissars in Crimea), genocide were coordinated by Stanislav Redens (Chairman of the Special Department of the VChK for Crimea, brother-in-law of J.V. Stalin), and the concealment of genocide was organized by Yu.P. Gaven, Chair of the Crimean Central Commission for so-called "Aid to the starving" (under the euphemistic name "Pomgol").

Stalin's brother-in-law Stanislav Redens, who directed the mass killings in Crimea in 1920-1921, reported that "Milliy Firqa was not a political party in any Marxist sense, but constituted a democratic political association of Crimean Tatar patriots." Lenin, however, stated, referring to the autochthonous nation of Crimea Crimean Tatars - as "a source of future speculation, espionage, all kinds of assistance - to capitalism... "we will fragment them and devour them"<sup>10</sup>. The term "fragment, devour " in this context is a euphemism for physical destruction. The Chair of the VChK Felix Dzerzhinsky personally issued directive orders, sending a telegram on November 16, 1920, with categorical instructions: "Take all measures so that not a single person passes from Crimea to the mainland. Deal with them according to the instructions I gave you in Moscow. No one from the population and no White Guardists should be allowed to pass from Crimea." The directive's language "deal with them according to the instructions I gave you in Moscow" demonstrates deliberate use of euphemistic language combined with reference to undocumented oral orders — a command pattern designed to conceal genocidal intent while ensuring its execution. This pattern of combining written orders with references to secret oral instructions mirrors command structures later identified by international tribunals as evidence of genocidal planning, where perpetrators deliberately avoid explicit documentation of extermination orders.

This directive transformed Crimea into a closed zone of mass destruction, depriving Crimean Tatars of the possibility of rescue through evacuation. As Rayfield noted, "there was a mass exodus, though not of Tatars... followed by the ruthless massacre by the Bolshevik Cheka, which more than decimated the remaining population." These data indicate that measures of violent isolation served the targeted physical destruction of Crimean Tatars and constituted a genocide. This blockade of Crimea and mass killing (1918–1921) was immediately followed by the AçlıkQırım-genocide through total forced seizure of all food in Crimea by the communist totalitarian regime (1921–1923). When Dzerzhinsky's directive demanded not to let "a single... White Guardist" out of Crimea, this de facto constituted a blockade and destruction directed against Crimean Tatar national liberation movements. The Bolshevik so-called 'struggle against

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<sup>10</sup> Transcript of the session of the VIII All-Russian Congress of Soviets, December 6, 1920; Rayfield, "A Seditious and Sinister Tribe", 290.

counterrevolution' rhetoric masked the targeted, systematic destruction of Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnic, and religious group indigenous to Crimea. The fabrication of pseudo-legal grounds for mass extermination of a national group constitutes genocide according to Article II of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

As documents attest, inflated data on the harvested crop were sent to Moscow - 9 million puds of grain, while in fact only 2 million puds were harvested. The political party Milly Firqa, at its conference, adopted a resolution demanding "to investigate those responsible for submitting statistical data that there were 9 million puds of grain in Crimea, while in reality there were 2 million."<sup>11</sup> As a result of the violent seizure of food - Crimean Tatars were deprived of the means of subsistence necessary for physical survival. Mass starvation led to the outbreak and spread of epidemics, which constituted the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group in whole or in part.

The mechanisms of genocide preparation during the Bolshevik period included the systematic dissemination of hate propaganda targeting Crimean Tatars, who were labeled them as so-called "bourgeois elements," "kulaks," "counterrevolutionaries," and "class enemies." The propaganda of the communist totalitarian regime shaped public consciousness in Crimea so that the mass killing of Crimean Tatars was perceived as legitimate and even desirable, it incited and mobilized the local non-Crimean Tatar population to participate in killings and pillage of Crimean Tatars; and it created a pseudo-legal justification for ethnic extermination under the guise of "class struggle." The deliberate incitement of hatred against Crimean Tatars and the formation of mass complicity in their destruction constituted conspiracy to commit genocide under Article III(b) of the 1948 Convention, transforming ethnic hatred into genocide organized by the totalitarian communist regime.<sup>12</sup>

According to official Soviet data, over half a year (between November 1920 and March 1921), up to 120,000 persons were executed, shot, and burned in Crimea: 20,000 in Aq-Mesçit (Simferopol), 12,000 in Aq-Yar (Sevastopol), 8,000 in Kefe (Feodosia), 8,000 in Kerch, and up to 5,000 in Yalta, among others. As S. Melgunov noted, "particular cruelty in Crimea was directed against the

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<sup>11</sup> Зарубин А.Г., Зарубин В.Г. Без победителей. Из истории Гражданской войны в Крыму. — 2-е изд., испр. и доп. — Симферополь: АнтикВА, 2008. — Указ. соч. — С.696; (TsDAK, F.P-1, Op.1, D.133)

<sup>12</sup> В. Е. Возгрин, *История крымских татар: очерки этнической истории коренного народа Крыма в четырёх томах* [History of the Crimean Tatars: Essays on the ethnic history of the indigenous people of Crimea in four volumes], т. 2 (Симферополь: Издательский дом "Тезис," 2016), 881.

autochthonous Crimean Tatar nation, which was regarded as a potential base of resistance." The scale of terror organized by Béla Kun is underscored by documented cases of mass shootings - over 4,000 persons were shot in a single night. At Kun's award ceremony, he was reportedly commended for killing over 12,000 persons, including 30 governors, over 150 generals, and 300 colonels.<sup>13</sup> Lenin's emissaries systematically executed his directive from November 1920 to "devour" the population of the peninsula. The terror continued for nearly a year, during which 60,000 Crimean Tatars were murdered. Only after the completion of these mass murders did the Bolsheviks introduce a semblance of "legality" to perpetuate systematic violence.<sup>14</sup>

*Genocide through deprivation of means of subsistence: systematic destruction of the foundations of existence of Crimean Tatar nation, 1921–1923*

Contemporary research enables the reconstruction of mechanisms for the targeted deprivation of the Crimean Tatar nation of means of subsistence, implemented under the guise of new "revolutionary" principles. The totalitarian communist regime systematically plundered the material foundations of Crimean Tatar existence. Under the pretext of socialist transformations, it committed the selective destruction of Crimean Tatar financial, religious, and commercial institutions. This included the forcible seizure of waqf lands—the foundation of Islamic education, the destruction of local industries including agriculture, animal husbandry, crafts, and trade, ethnically differentiated forcible extraction of grain and food, and the prohibition of free movement within the territory of Crimea for the purpose of seeking food. All of this deprived the targeted group of means of subsistence. Bolshevik leaders deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnic, and religious group in whole or in part, while preserving the possibilities for existence of other ethnic groups.

The forcible seizure of waqf lands by officials of Bolshevik Russia on February 16, 1921, constitutes genocidal plunder as defined by Raphael Lemkin<sup>15</sup>—namely, the deliberate destruction of the material foundations of the existence of a nation. For over five centuries, waqfs functioned as religious endowments that financed Muslim educational and religious institutions, ensuring the material and cultural

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<sup>13</sup> Donald Rayfield, *"A Seditious and Sinister Tribe": The Crimean Tatars and Their Khanate* (Reaktion Books, 2024).

<sup>14</sup> Вячеслав Зарубин, «Проект Украина»: Крым в годы смуты (1917–1921) [“Project Ukraine”: Crimea in the Years of Turmoil (1917–1921)] (Москва: Фолио, 2013), 424.

<sup>15</sup> Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 82–84.

independence of Crimean Tatars through mektebs and medreses.<sup>16</sup> As Khalimov (1923) noted, 'such actions led to the mass closure of mektebs and medreses and dealt a severe blow to the religious, social, cultural, and educational life of Crimean Tatars.

The unlawful seizure of 80,000 *desiatynas*<sup>17</sup> of waqf land<sup>18</sup> - the remnant of approximately 300,000 *desiatynas* that had existed in 1803, already reduced through a century of Russian imperial plunder - constitutes the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the cultural and physical destruction of the group in whole or in part, as defined by Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention. The liquidation of the waqf system constituted an institutional component of systematic and deliberate acts of genocide, which deprived Crimean Tatars of their established mechanisms of collective survival and education, reinforced by simultaneous violent extraction of livestock and trade prohibitions.

Under international law, the systematic destruction of a national group's material institutions, combined with deliberate deprivation of means of subsistence causing starvation, disease, and death, constitutes genocide as defined by Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention.

#### *Prohibition of trade as deprivation of means of subsistence*

The decree of the Bolshevik regime, issued in occupied Crimea on December 12, 1920, which prohibited private trade in wine and tobacco, exemplified the policy of selective plunder aimed at destroying the foundation of Crimean Tatar means of subsistence. This prohibition deprived 90% of Crimean Tatar families along the southern coast of their primary source of income. Such action constitutes a material component of genocide, achieved through the deliberate destruction of the economic livelihood of a protected national group.

Viticulture and tobacco cultivation held not only material but also profound cultural significance for Crimean Tatars, representing centuries of accumulated expertise and forming part of their national heritage. The prohibition of this trade constitutes the deliberate infliction of conditions calculated to bring about the

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<sup>16</sup> *Mekteb* (also spelled *maktab*) is the Arabic word for a traditional Muslim elementary school that historically taught Quran recitation, reading, writing, and grammar (editor's note).

<sup>17</sup> *Десятина* (*desiatyna*) or tithe is a term meaning a tenth of something, most often used to refer to a religious tax (a tenth of income for the benefit of the church) or an ancient unit of land area (approximately 1.09 hectares) (editor's note).

<sup>18</sup> О. В. Балагура, Д. А. Прохоров, В. Г. Тур, *Исторические особенности и современные проблемы этнокультурных и этнополитических процессов в Крыму* [*Historical Features and Contemporary Problems of Ethnocultural and Ethnopolitical Processes in Crimea*], ред. А. И. Айбабин (Симферополь: Антикава, 2012), 36. See also Зарубин, «Проект Украина» [*Project Ukraine*].

physical destruction of the group according to Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention, as it was directly aimed at depriving a specific national group of means of subsistence.

According to Lemkin's concept, genocide encompasses not only the physical extermination of a group but also the systematic destruction of its material and social foundations, leading to its gradual disappearance as a distinct entity. The simultaneity of the trade prohibition with the forcible seizure of waqf lands and forcible extraction of livestock demonstrates the systematic character of the genocidal policy of the totalitarian regime toward the destruction of Crimean Tatars through the deliberate infliction of conditions incompatible with the physical survival of the group.

#### *Systematic forcible extraction of livestock*

Another stage of the systematic destruction of Crimean Tatars was the forcible extraction of all pedigree herds from Crimean Tatar farms - which constitutes genocide through deprivation of basic means of production and subsistence. This was carried out under Order No. 9, dated November 19, 1920, signed by Béla Kun and executed with the participation of Rozalia Zemlyachka. This measure led to the destruction of private animal-breeding schools and centers for the development of new breeds, demonstrating the deliberate dismantling of the established expertise of Crimean Tatars in animal husbandry.

As documented in the memorandum, these actions swiftly eradicated specialized educational institutions that had long supported Crimean Tatar farms.<sup>19</sup> Such measures constitute genocide through the destruction of established means of subsistence and the disruption of intergenerational transmission of specialized knowledge.

These actions were accompanied by systematic plunder - mass forcible extraction of food and property perpetrated by the occupying Red Army under the command of Mikhail Frunze and Semyon Budyonny. The appeal by Crimean Tatar governing body (officially termed the Revcom by totalitarian communist regime) member S.M. Memetov from Bakhchysarai testifies to the character of these atrocities: "The activity of repressive organs has acquired a chauvinist character. Arrests occur without any grounds: products, goods, furniture, and other items are forcibly extracted."

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<sup>19</sup> Т. Б. Бикова, *Створення Кримської АСРР (1917–1921 рр.)* [Formation of the Crimean ASSR (1917–1921)] (Київ: Інститут історії України НАН, 2011), 135.



The extraction of livestock constituted a critical component of the systematic and deliberate crime of genocide through the creation of conditions for the physical destruction of Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnical, and religious group, depriving them of essential sources of food, labor, and trade in the context of simultaneous prohibitions and forcible seizure of land. According to Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention, the systematic deprivation of a protected group's means of production—designed to render it dependent and control its survival—constitutes genocide. Simultaneous mass forcible extraction, targeted arrests, and large-scale plunder constituted systematic acts of genocide aimed at destroying the material foundations of the autochthonous Crimean Tatar nation.

*Systematic forcible extraction under the pretext of "surpluses"*

Mass forcible seizure under the pretext of 'surpluses' in Crimean Tatar districts demonstrated the selective character of totalitarian communist atrocities against the autochthonous nation of Crimea. Extermination squads dispatched to mountainous districts for the ostensible “extraction of surpluses” perpetrated extrajudicial executions. Eyewitness testimony records that 'without trial or investigation, they shot everyone in whose possession more than three pounds of flour was found.’<sup>20</sup>

The testimony of Mirsaid Sultan-Galiyev documents the predatory nature of these atrocities: 'One of the unlawful actions of the totalitarian communist regime in occupied Crimea was the so-called extraction of surpluses from Crimean Tatar families. Originating in Aq-Mescit (Simferopol), it quickly spread to all districts of Crimea and in some places turned into a chronic disease. It was conducted systematically and constituted organized plunder’<sup>21</sup>

Extrajudicial executions perpetrated by extermination squads against Crimean Tatars as a selectively targeted national group—for possessing more than three pounds of flour—constituted deliberate killing of the autochthonous nation of Crimea and the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnical, racial, and religious group. Such acts qualify as genocide according to Article II(a) and II(c) of the 1948 Convention.

According to Raphael Lemkin's concept of genocide, which encompasses eight interconnected dimensions of group destruction—political, social, cultural,

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<sup>20</sup> Центральний державний архів України в Києві [Central State Archive of Ukraine in Kyiv], hereafter TsDAK, f. R-1923, op. 1, spr. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Бекірова, Іванець, Тищенко, Громенко, Аблаєв, *Історія Криму та кримськотатарського народу* [History of Crimea and the Crimean Tatar People], 114.

economic, biological, physical, religious, and moral—the actions undertaken by the totalitarian communist regime in Crimea correspond to each of these dimensions. This correspondence constitutes compelling evidence of *dolus specialis*, the specific intent to annihilate the Crimean Tatar nation as such.

Sultan-Galiyev described in detail the process of systematic plunder: 'I personally witnessed such a "requisition" in the city of Alupka. All party and Soviet workers perpetrated this work... Armed squadrons of the Red Army perpetrated requisitions. The Red Army soldiers for some reason were all drunk. They pillaged absolutely everything, leaving only a single set of undergarments.

Particularly revealing was the selectively targeted plunder and distribution of plundered property. As Sultan-Galiyev noted: 'The distribution of forcibly extracted items was also conducted in a disorganized manner. For example, in Aq-Mescit (Simferopol), the Crimean Tatar poor, despite their dire need — women walking in sacks, barefoot and half-naked — received absolutely nothing. At the same time, a huge quantity of so-called surpluses was extracted especially from Crimean Tatars — such as pillows and bed sheets, which serve them instead of furniture.' Such selectively targeted plunder and distribution, as Sultan-Galiyev documented, demonstrates the deliberate targeting of Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnical, racial, and religious group, and constitutes the intentional infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group — a direct violation of Article II(c) of the Genocide Convention..<sup>22</sup>

*Demographic data as evidence of genocide through deliberate deprivation of means of subsistence*

The dynamics of distribution of so-called "aid" during the peak of mass mortality—which resulted from the deliberate infliction of conditions for physical destruction by the totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia—reveals a stark disproportion between the scale of the genocidal crisis and the limited measures undertaken.

Records from the Aq-Mescit (Simferopol) District Committee of so-called "aid" (February 1922) provide the clearest evidence of selectively differentiated distribution. Official reports stated that "'aid' to districts is provided far too

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<sup>22</sup> U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article II(c); Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 82–84.

insignificantly, while mass mortality in the district is colossal.”<sup>23</sup> They further asserted that "if in some districts there are visible signs of 'aid,' then in predominantly Crimean Tatar districts, the dying are left to their fate.”<sup>24</sup>

Documentary evidence confirms the systematic deprivation of so-called "aid" to the autonomous nation of Crimea. Demographic data reveal indicators of genocide according to Lemkin's definition: in the Elbuzly district, the population was reduced from 760 to 400 persons; in Buyuk (Velykyi) Taraq-Tash, between November 1921 and April 1922, over 800 out of 2,000 inhabitants perished. In Kuchuk (Malyi) Taraq-Tash, a corpse was exhumed from a grave for consumption. The peak of mortality occurred in March 1922, when over 1,000 deaths were recorded in one district within 19 days. Extreme cases included exhumation of corpses and three documented instances of cannibalism.<sup>25</sup>

The geographical distribution of mortality in predominantly Crimean Tatar areas constitutes direct evidence of genocide. Such mortality rates in peacetime constitute the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group, qualifying as genocide according to Article II(c) of the 1948 Convention.

#### *Legal qualification of evidence according to international law*<sup>26</sup>

The essence of the crime of genocide is defined in Article II of the 1948 Convention, which states that "genocide means... acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, any national, ethnical, racial, or religious group." In both the doctrine and practice of international law, it is widely recognized that, to classify criminal acts as genocide, it is necessary to establish that the perpetrator acted with a specific intent (*dolus specialis*) to destroy a particular group identified in the Convention, and that the criminal conduct was directed specifically against that group as such. Genocide differs from crimes against humanity or war crimes in the nature of intent, not in the number of victims. It is directed not at people in general, but at a clearly defined group; it targets the group as such, rather than individual members alone.

An analysis of Article II of the Convention demonstrates that the totalitarian regime committed genocide against the Crimean Tatar national group with the

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<sup>23</sup> Кондратюк, «Крымские татары в условиях голода 1921–1923 годов» [“Crimean Tatars under the Conditions of the 1921–1923 Famine”], *Крымское историческое обозрение* [Crimean Historical Review] 9, no. 1 (2022): 31–39.

<sup>24</sup> Зарубин, «Проект Украина» [“Project Ukraine”].

<sup>25</sup> Государственный архив Российской Федерации [State Archive of the Russian Federation], hereafter: GARF, f. R-1318, op. 13, d. 4, l. 28; see also Кондратюк, «Крымские татары в условиях голода 1921–1923 годов» [“Crimean Tatars under the Conditions of the 1921–1923 Famine”], *Крымское историческое обозрение* [Crimean Historical Review] 9, no. 1 (2022): 31–39.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/genocide-prevention/1948-convention>

intent to destroy it as such. Article II identifies five forms of genocide: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The criminal actions of Soviet Russia fall under all five forms of genocide outlined in Article II of the Convention. For this reason, Raphael Lemkin described the destruction of the Crimean Tatar nation as "a classic case of genocide.

It should be emphasized that the AqlıkQırım-genocide in Crimea was carried out with the dual purpose of suppressing the Crimean Tatar national liberation movement, which after renewed the Bolshevik occupation of the Crimean Tatar Nation's Republic, and of destroying Crimean Tatar nation as a distinct entity.

From 1918 until the late 1980s, the totalitarian Soviet regime suppressed any discussion of the 1921–1923 AqlıkQırım genocide, the 1932–1933 genocide of the Crimean Tatar nation, the 1938 genocide of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia, and the 1944 Sürgün genocide. After Ukraine regained independence, politicians and scholars — both in power and in opposition — continued to deny these genocides and criticized efforts to achieve their official recognition, arguing that such initiatives would damage relations with Russia.

The pre-trial investigation conducted by collegium of Crimean Tatar scholars established that the ideologist, instigator, and organizer of the AqlıkQırım-genocide in Crimea in 1921–1923, were Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin, who played a leading and decisive role in planning the genocide, creating the mechanism for its execution, and overseeing its implementation. The investigation comprehensively and fully established the specific intent of Lenin, J.V. Stalin, F. Dzerzhinsky, Redens, B. Kuna, R. Zemlyachka, Yu. Larin, Yu.P. Haven (Dauman), S.L. Davidov-Wulfson, and Yu.L. Pyatakov to destroy the Crimean Tatar nation — and not any other national group — in whole or in part. It was objectively proven that this intent was directed specifically against the Crimean Tatar national group as such.

Lemkin's concept of a "coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups" allows the classification of the 1921–1923 events as genocide under Article II(c) of the 1948

Convention. Lemkin emphasized that the deliberate creation of living conditions calculated to bring about the physical destruction of a group constitutes genocide when accompanied by a special intent to destroy the group as such. In the Crimean case, this intent is evidenced by the ethnic selectivity of the victims and the coordinated actions of state authorities—criteria fully consistent with the practice of international tribunals..

### *Proof of special intent (dolus specialis)*

The evidence proves the existence of special intent (*dolus specialis*) to destroy in whole or in part the autochthonous Crimean Tatar national group as such, which constitutes genocide according to Article II of the 1948 Convention.

The directive of the Chair of the VChK F.E. Dzerzhinsky No. 514/s dated November 16, 1920: 'No one from the population should be allowed to pass from Crimea' — demonstrates the intent to isolate and destroy. The statement of V.I. Lenin dated December 6, 1920, regarding Crimean Tatars: 'we will fragment them, devour them' — establishes the intent to physically destroy the group as such. The statement of the Chair of the Soviet administration of Crimea Béla Kun: 'Crimea is a bottle from which no counterrevolutionary will escape' — confirms the intent for total destruction of the national group as such.

The totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia manipulated statistical data, claiming the existence of 9 million puds of grain in occupied Crimea, while the actual harvest was only 2 million puds. The inflation of statistical data by 4.5 times created a pseudo-legal pretext for genocide: total extraction of food, deprivation of Crimean Tatars of means of subsistence, deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the autochthonous nation of Crimea, systematic plunder, and killing of Crimean Tatars by death squads on the spot without trial for possessing more than 1.5 kg of grain. The totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia concealed the genocide from the outside world under euphemisms such as "natural drought," "crop failure," "catastrophe," while 76% of all victims were Crimean Tatars—an autochthonous nation of Crimea. This proves *dolus specialis* - the intent to physically destroy the Crimean Tatar national group as such in whole or in part as such.

The mortality rate of Crimean Tatars was 35.02%, while the mortality rate of all other groups combined was 4.05%. The ratio of 8.65:1 proves targeted selectivity. Crimean Tatars constituted 26.8% of the population but 76% of all

those killed. The probability of such selectivity occurring by chance is practically zero ( $p < 0.0001$ ). These statistical data prove *dolus specialis* — the intent to destroy the Crimean Tatar national group as such.

The orders of the totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia for forcible extraction of all food from Crimean Tatar families, killing on the spot without trial, blockade of Crimea, prohibition of wine and tobacco trade, forcible extraction of livestock, violent seizure of waqf lands — prove the intent to physically destroy the Crimean Tatar nation as such. The geographic concentration of mortality in predominantly Crimean Tatar regions proves deliberate targeting.

The genocide of the Crimean Tatar nation in 1921–1923 is proven according to Article II(a), II(b), and II(c) of the 1948 Convention. This provides the legal basis for the recognition of genocide and the attribution of responsibility to the Russian Federation as the successor state of the USSR.

*Statistical Analysis of the Demographic Consequences of the Genocide of the Autochthonous Crimean Tatar Nation*

The statistical analysis is based on processing archival demographic data using a method of proportional comparison. Mortality coefficients (%) were calculated for the Crimean Tatar national group (76,000 out of 217,000 = 35.02%) and for all other groups (24,000 out of 591,900 = 4.05%).

To test the statistical significance of the difference in proportions, the following formula was applied:

$$z = (p_1 - p_2) / \sqrt{[p(1 - p)(1/n_1 + 1/n_2)]}$$

where

$p_1$  and  $p_2$  represent the mortality proportions

$n_1$  and  $n_2$  are the sizes of the respective groups

In this formula,  $z$  is a two-proportion  $z$ -test, a standard method for comparing proportions between two groups;  $p_1 = 0.3502$  (the mortality proportion among Crimean Tatars);  $p_2 = 0.0405$  (the mortality proportion among other groups);  $n_1 = 217,000$  (the Crimean Tatar population);  $n_2 = 591,900$  (the population of other groups), and  $p$  (the so-called pooled proportion) is calculated as the sum of all deaths divided by the sum of all people, i.e. 100,000 divided by 808,900, which gives 0.1237. When we plug all these numbers into the formula, we get a  $z$  of

approximately 375. This means that when  $z$  is greater than 2.58, the difference is already statistically significant at the 99% level. Our  $z$ -value of approximately 375 proves that the difference between the mortality rates of 350.2‰ versus 40.5‰ (or 35.02% versus 4.05%) is not random, but statistically highly significant. The mortality rate of Crimean Tatars was 8.6 times higher, and this certainly could not have happened by chance.<sup>27</sup>

A disproportionality coefficient was calculated as the ratio of the share of those killed to the share of the population ( $76\% / 26.8\% = 2.84$ ). To evaluate the likelihood of random variation, a binomial model was used, with the null hypothesis stating that the probability of death was equal across all groups.

### *Results of the Statistical Analysis*

Statistical data on the demographic losses of the autochthonous Crimean Tatar nation during 1921–1923 constitute irrefutable mathematical proof of genocide perpetrated by the leaders of the totalitarian regime — Lenin and Stalin — with the direct participation of Dzerzhinsky, Pyatakov, Larin, Gaven, Kirov, Dukelsky, Béla Kun, and Rosalia Zemlyachka. A comprehensive analysis of archival documents, performed using modern methods of demographic statistics, reveals critical disparities in mortality between Crimean Tatars and other groups that cannot be explained by natural causes or random factors.

The calculated mortality coefficients (%) for the Crimean Tatar national group (76,000 out of 217,000 = 35.02%) and for all other groups combined (24,000 out of 591,900 = 4.05%) show extreme imbalance. According to the Crimean CEC, by August 1922, the population of Crimea had decreased by 100,000 (21%) due to the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about physical destruction of the group. A mortality coefficient of 35.02% among Crimean Tatars, compared to 4.05% among other groups, yields a ratio of 8.6:1, which mathematically excludes chance ( $p < 0.0001$ ).

The geographic distribution of those killed confirms the targeted selectivity of the genocide. In districts predominantly inhabited by Crimean Tatars, mortality ranged from 75% to 90% of the population. In the district of Buyuk (Velykyi) Taraktash, more than 800 out of 2,000 residents were killed; in Kuchuk (Malyi) Taraktash, 715 out of 1,867 people died. In the Karasubazar district, predominantly populated by Crimean Tatars, more than 650 bodies were buried in the period from

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<sup>27</sup> From personal correspondence with the author on November 4, 2025 (editor's note).

January 15 to February 20, 1922 alone. In the Kokkoz district, 3,000 out of a population of 19,000 died. At the same time, in the German colonies — although they also suffered — mortality levels were significantly lower.<sup>28</sup>

The statistics on violent food seizure prove genocide. The totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia plundered 122.6% of cattle and 102.7% of sheep in Crimean Tatar districts as of June 1, 1921. For comparison: in districts concentrated with Russian and German population, the extraction rate did not exceed 30–50%. An extraction rate exceeding 100% means total extraction of all existing livestock, breeding animals, and young stock — which constitutes forensic evidence of intent to physically destroy the group. Such extraction completely deprived Crimean Tatars of means of subsistence and made the survival of the group impossible. This proves *dolus specialis* — the intent to physically destroy the Crimean Tatar nation as such according to Article II(c) of the 1948 Convention.<sup>29</sup>

The dynamics of genocide prove *dolus specialis*. In October and November 1921, the totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia deprived 205,000 persons of means of subsistence, of whom 100,000 were children condemned to death. By January 1922, the regime was killing 500 persons per day, and by February — 700 persons per day. In April 1922, the regime deprived 347,000 persons of means of subsistence, of whom 173,000 were children condemned to death.<sup>30</sup> Of the 100,000 killed in Crimea, 76,000 were Crimean Tatars — 76% of all those killed, while Crimean Tatars constituted only 26.8% of the population. This statistically excludes randomness and proves *dolus specialis* — the intent to physically destroy the Crimean Tatar national group as such according to Article II(a) and II(c) of the 1948 Convention. In early May 1922, Chairman of the Tatar Party Conference O. Deren-Ayerly appealed for aid to the Republic of Azerbaijan, reporting that 400,000 persons — over 60% of the entire population of Crimea — were deprived of means of subsistence and condemned to death.<sup>31</sup>

The distribution of so-called 'aid' proves the targeted selectivity of genocide. The secret directive of the Central Committee of the RCP(b) dated December 21,

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<sup>28</sup> DARK, f. R-709, op. 1, spr. 168, ark. 119.

<sup>29</sup> В. Н. Пашеня, *Етнодержавне будівництво в Криму у першій половині XX століття (1900–1945)* [*Ethno-State Building in Crimea in the First Half of the 20th Century (1900–1945)*] (Сімферополь, 2008), 88.

<sup>30</sup> Советская деревня глазами ВЧК—ОГПУ—НКВД. 1918—1939. Документы и материалы. В 4-х т. / Т. 1. 1918—1922 гг. / Под ред. А. Береловича, В. Данилова. — М.: «Российская политическая энциклопедия» (РОССПЭН), 2000. — С. 633

<sup>31</sup> Kırımlı, Hakan. "The Famine of 1921-22 in the Crimea and the Volga Basin and the Relief from Turkey." *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 1 (January 2003): 37-88.



1922, provided for the use of resources 'to meet the needs of communists in districts of mass killing,' creating a hierarchy of survival based on national origin. The totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia, which perpetrated forcible extraction of food, covered with so-called 'aid' only 5% of children subjected to genocide. In shelters, 50% of children were killed through deliberately created conditions: unsanitary conditions, overcrowding, epidemics, and rations of 100 grams per day — these institutions became a means of killing under the cover of so-called 'humanitarian aid,' which constitutes genocide according to Article II(a) and II(c) of the 1948 Convention.<sup>32</sup>

The falsification of statistical data by the totalitarian communist regime proves the intent to commit genocide<sup>33</sup> Reports deliberately inflated the harvested crop by 4.5 times - nine million *poods*<sup>34</sup> of grain instead of the actual two million.<sup>35</sup> Such falsification constitutes evidence of intent to obstruct international so-called "aid" for the purpose of continuing the killing of Crimean Tatars, which constitutes genocide according to Article II(c) of the 1948 Convention.

The totalitarian communist regime created so-called 'shelters' and 'feeding points' as means of killing Crimean Tatar children. Only 5% of children deprived of means of subsistence were covered by these institutions — 95% were left to die.<sup>36</sup> In so-called 'shelters,' 50% of children were killed through deliberately created conditions: unsanitary conditions, overcrowding, epidemics, and rations of 100 grams per day.<sup>37</sup> These institutions became a means of killing under the cover of so-called 'humanitarian aid.' A ration of 100 grams per day (approximately 260 kcal) constituted 17.3% of a child's physiological needs (1500 kcal), which ensured the killing of children within 28–35 days while maintaining the appearance of 'feeding.' The totalitarian communist regime deliberately established such rations to kill Crimean Tatar children.

Crimean Tatar parents were forced to choose: give up a child to a so-called "shelter," where 50% of children were killed, or keep them without food. This

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<sup>32</sup> Бекірова, Іванець, Тищенко, Громенко, Аблаєв, *Історія Криму та кримськотатарського народу* [*History of Crimea and the Crimean Tatar People*]; see also Kırımlı, "The Famine of 1921–22 in the Crimea and the Volga Basin and the Relief from Turkey," 37–88.

<sup>33</sup> Juliette Cadiot, *Лаборатория Империи: Россия/СССР, 1860–1940* [*The Empire's Laboratory: Russia/USSR, 1860–1940*], перевод с франц. Е. Кустовой (Москва: Новое литературное обозрение, 2010), 336.

<sup>34</sup> A *pood* is a historical Russian unit of weight, equal to approximately 16.38 kilograms or 36.11 pounds (editor's note).

<sup>35</sup> А. Г. Зарубин, В. Г. Зарубин, *Без победителей: Из истории Гражданской войны в Крыму* [*Without Victors: From the History of the Civil War in Crimea*] 2-е изд. (Симферополь: Антикава, 2008), 696.

<sup>36</sup> Бекірова, Гульнара, Андрій Іванець, Юлія Тищенко, Сергій Громенко, та Бекір Аблаєв. *Історія Криму та кримськотатарського народу: Навчальний посібник*. Київ: "Кримська родина"; "Майстер Книг", 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Бекірова и др., *Історія Криму*, 45. с. 115.

proves genocide according to Article II(a), II(b), II(c), II(d), and II(e) of the 1948 Convention: killing of children (Article II(a)); causing serious bodily harm (Article II(b)); deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the group (Article II(c)); destruction of the group's biological capacity for reproduction through mass killing of children and measures intended to prevent births - through killing of children (Article II(d)); forcible transfer of children - to so-called "shelters" (Article II(e)).

The statistics of killings by time periods in Crimea prove genocide. The peak of killings occurred in March 1922, when over one thousand persons were killed in one district within 19 days. Monthly dynamics: January 1922 - 8,000 killed, February - 14,413 killed, March - 19,902 killed, which constitutes a 250% increase over two months during which the totalitarian communist regime continued killing Crimean Tatars.<sup>38</sup>

Eyewitness testimonies prove the genocide of Crimean Tatar nation. Resident of Adzhimendi district Abduraman Bariyev testified that the totalitarian communist regime violently plundered everything, and for non-fulfillment of the plan did not give winter crops for sowing. Crimean Tatars were forced to eat dead birds, cats, fallen livestock, leather from shoes. There were cases when mothers ate their children.

Documented instances of cannibalism prove that the totalitarian communist regime killed Crimean Tatars through deprivation of food. In Karasubazar, a mother slaughtered her 6-year-old child, boiled her, and ate her together with her 12-year-old daughter. The fact that mothers killed and ate their own children proves that the totalitarian communist regime deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of Crimean Tatars — evidence of *dolus specialis*, the intent to physically destroy the Crimean Tatar national group as such, in whole or in part, according to Article II(a), II(b), and II(c) of the 1948 Convention.

In light of international legal precedents — particularly the jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda<sup>39</sup> — documented acts such as the destruction of family structures, the deliberate creation of life-threatening conditions, and mass psychological traumatization may be interpreted as evidence of special intent (*dolus specialis*). The establishment of such intent was crucial to

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<sup>38</sup> The Zarubins on page 35 gave somewhat different death figures: January – 8,000; February – 14,413; March – 19,902; April – 12,753. However, they also admit that the figures and the statistical data cited in the contemporary documents of that period were confusing as well as far from complete. See A. Г. Зарубин, В. Г. Зарубин, *Без победителей* [Without Victors], 35.

<sup>39</sup> *The Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu* (ICTR-96-4).

the legal recognition of genocide in Rwanda, where not only physical killings but also the systematic prevention of a group's survival as such were deemed genocidal acts.

The totalitarian communist regime forced Crimean Tatar women into prostitution for a piece of bread.<sup>40</sup> This constitutes sexual violence and genocide according to Article II(b) and II(d) of the 1948 Convention—causing serious bodily and mental harm to members of the group and measures intended to prevent births.

The statistics of killings by age groups prove genocide. The totalitarian communist regime of Bolshevik Russia targeted children of Crimean Tatars —this constitutes genocide according to Article II(a) and II(d) of the 1948 Convention: killing members of the group (Article II(a)) and measures intended to prevent births within the group, since the killing of children destroys the possibility of the nation's reproduction (Article II(d)).

The violent seizure of waqf lands of Crimean Tatars proves genocide. Waqfs provided the social protection system of the Crimean Tatar national group: donations in mosques supported the poor, orphans, widows; income from lands fed those who could not feed themselves. During the Crimean Khanate, waqf lands constituted 600,000 desyatinas.<sup>41</sup> The Russian Empire violently seized 300,000 desyatinas.<sup>42</sup> By 1918, 80,000 desyatinas remained. Bolshevik Russia seized the last 80,000 desyatinas of waqf lands of Crimean Tatars. This violent seizure completely destroyed the social protection system and deprived the most vulnerable Crimean Tatars - children, orphans, widows, the elderly - of means of subsistence. This proves *dolus specialis* - the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, Crimean Tatar national group, as such, according to Article II(c) of the 1948 Convention.

The letter of Lenin, distributed through Molotov, documents genocide. Lenin wrote: "It is precisely now and only now, when people are eating human flesh in the starving-stricken regions and hundreds if not thousands of corpses lie on the roads, we can (and therefore must) carry out the extraction of religious valuables with the most frenzied and merciless energy without hesitating to suppress any

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<sup>40</sup> Kirmli, H. (2003). The famine of 1921–22 in the Crimea and the Volga basin and the relief from Turkey. Middle Eastern Studies, 39(1), 37–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200412331301597a>; ЦДАК, Ф.Р-1923, Оп.1, Д.20

<sup>41</sup> Возгрін, В.Є. Історія кримських татар: нариси етнічної історії корінного народу Криму. Т. 1-4. Київ: Дух і Літера, 2018.

<sup>42</sup> Жизнь национальностей. Книга первая. Январь 1923. Под редакцией М.П. Павловича, М.С. Султан-Галиева и И.П. Трайнина. Москва: Народный комиссариат по делам национальностей, 1923. стр. 126.

kind of resistance whatsoever. <...> the struggle against us will be made more difficult if we precisely at this moment, precisely in connection with the starvation, carry out with the greatest speed and ruthlessness the suppression of the reactionary clergy."<sup>43</sup> This letter proves *dolus specialis*—the intent to use the deliberate deprivation of means of subsistence as an instrument for the destruction of the Crimean Tatar national group as such.

The communist totalitarian regime perpetrated the violent seizure of religious property and sacred valuables from mosques across all districts of Crimea. As archival documents testify, "during the large-scale violent seizure of religious valuables, a significant quantity of religious artifacts were extracted from mosques." Priceless works of art and other antiquities found in the historical palaces and estates of Crimea were also subjected to forcible extraction. Government officials and scholars tasked with protecting historical monuments appealed to Haven Yu. P. requesting to stop the extraction, but their appeals were ignored.<sup>44</sup> From the southern coast, from villas and palaces abandoned by their owners, valuables and works of art were forcibly removed (in total—worth 899,087 gold prewar rubles or 17,405 Turkish liras).<sup>45</sup>

Through the so-called "KrimTsKPomgol" the extracted valuables were sold on domestic and foreign markets.<sup>46</sup> With the funds from extracted religious valuables, in May 1922, a children's labor colony was created (up to 200 persons).<sup>47</sup>

The so-called "Crimean Pomgol" sold grain to Crimean Tatars deprived of means of subsistence in exchange for gold and valuables.<sup>48</sup> For this purpose, special points were opened in all districts of Crimea. After collecting all the gold that remained in the hands of Crimean Tatars, grain was sold for copper. When no copper remained, they extracted even camel wool (*ulpaks*) used to stuff mattresses — the last physical possession of the dying. Thus, the communist totalitarian regime deprived Crimean Tatars of their last means of subsistence.<sup>49</sup> This systematic extraction of absolutely everything, down to mattress stuffing, proves *dolus specialis* — the

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<sup>43</sup> Новые документы В. И. Ленина (1920-1922 гг.). Известия ЦК КПСС. 1990. № 4. С. 191-192. (Novye dokumenty V. I. Lenina (1920–1922 gg.). Izvestiya TsK KPSS. 1990. No. 4. P. 191–192).

<sup>44</sup> Hakan Kirmli, 2022

<sup>45</sup> ЦГАК Ф.Р-151. Оп. I. Д. 79.

<sup>46</sup> ЦГАК Ф.Р-151. Оп. I. Д. 79.

<sup>47</sup> Зарубин В. Голод 1921-1923 гг. в Крыму (по сводкам ЧК/ГПУ). //Республика Крым, -1992. - №№ 4, 5, 6.

<sup>48</sup> Баранченко В. Е. Гавен. - М.: Молодая гвардия, 1967.

<sup>49</sup> Kirmli, H. (2003). The famine of 1921–22 in the Crimea and the Volga basin and the relief from Turkey. Middle Eastern Studies, 39(1), 37–88. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00263200412331301597a>

intent to physically destroy the Crimean Tatar national group in whole or in part as such according to Article II(c) of the 1948 Convention

*Four waves of genocides of Crimean Tatar nation by totalitarian communist regime*

Following the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1917, Crimean Tatars restored their statehood in Crimea, interrupted by the Russian Empire in 1783, by proclaiming the Crimean Nation's Republic. In 1918, the totalitarian communist regime carried out the renewed occupation of Crimea, which Crimean Tatars never recognized. The legitimate government of the Crimean Tatar Nation's Republic continued in exile. Cafer Seydahmet, Minister of Defense and Foreign Affairs of Crimea, headed the Crimean Tatars Nation's Center, which operated as the government-in-exile through organizations in Turkey, Romania, Poland, Germany and the United States. — throughout the illegal occupation of Crimea. During the illegal occupation from 1918 to 1991, the occupying regime perpetrated four waves of genocides against the autochthonous nation of Crimea — the Crimean Tatars. Each wave of genocide had *dolus specialis* — the intent to destroy Crimean Tatars as a national, ethnical, racial, and religious group in whole or in part, as defined by Article II of the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The AqlıkQırım-genocide of 1921–1923 described in detail above. Among the principal organizers, perpetrators, and accomplices of the genocide were V.I. Lenin (Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars), F.E. Dzerzhinsky (Chairman of the VChK), J.V. Stalin (People's Commissar for Nationalities), Béla Kun (Chairman of the Soviet administration of Crimea), Rozalia Zemlyachka (Responsible Secretary of the Crimean Regional Committee), Georgy Pyatakov (member of the Crimean Revolutionary Committee), Yuri Larin (founder of the so-called "prodrazvyorstka" system), Stanislav Redens (Chairman of the Special Department of the VChK in Crimea), Yuri Gaven (Chairman of the Crimean Commission of the so-called "Pomgol").

The genocide of Crimean Tatar nation of 1932–1933. Among the principal organizers, perpetrators, and accomplices of the genocide were J.V. Stalin (General Secretary of the CC VKP(b)), V.M. Molotov (Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR), L.M. Kaganovich (Secretary of the CC VKP(b)), P.P. Postyshev (Secretary of the CC VKP(b)), Yu. Larin, L.D. Trotsky, L.B. Kamenev, S.V. Kosior (General Secretary of the CC CP(b)U). The Head of the Crimean

Government Memet Kubayev<sup>50</sup> during a party audience officially stated that Moscow is perpetrating the systematic destruction of Crimean Tatars on the territory of Crimea. This statement attracted the attention of international institutions.<sup>51</sup> Osip Mandelstam witnessed the destruction of the Crimean Tatar national group and documented the destruction of the autochthonous nation of Crimea in his Crimean texts. This is genocide according to Article II(a, b, c, d, e) of the 1948 Convention.

The totalitarian communist regime perpetrated genocide of the Crimean Tatars through the deliberate killing of the Crimean Tatar intelligentsia in 1937–1938. Among the principal organizers, perpetrators, and accomplices were J.V. Stalin (General Secretary of the CC VKP(b)), N.I. Yezhov (People's Commissar of the NKVD of the USSR), G.G. Yagoda (People's Commissar of the NKVD of the USSR until 1936), and L.P. Beria (People's Commissar of the NKVD of the USSR from 1938). The occupying regime killed over 10,000 Crimean Tatar scholars, researchers, intellectuals, writers, poets, teachers, doctors, engineers, and religious leaders. This constitutes genocide according to Article II(a), (b), (c), and (e) of the 1948 Convention. Among those killed were Asan Sabri Aivazov, Chairman of the First Qurultay of Crimean Nation's Republic and writer; Osman Akchokrakly, philologist, historian, and archaeologist; Usein Bodaninsky, director of the Bakhchysarai Museum and ethnographer; Bekir Choban-zade, poet and scholar; Abdulla Latif-zade, poet and translator; Ilyas Tarkhan, Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of the Crimean ASSR; Abduraim Samedinov, Chairman of the Crimean Government 1929–1937; Mamut Nedim, editor and publicist; Dzhafer Gafarov, writer; Kerim Dzhemaledinov, scholar; Bilyal Chagar, teacher; and thousands of others.

The Sürgün genocide of 1944. Among the principal organizers, perpetrators, and accomplices were J.V. Stalin (Chairman of the State Defense Committee), L.P. Beria (People's Commissar of NKVD of the USSR), B.Z. Kobulov (Deputy People's Commissar of NKVD), I.A. Serov (Deputy People's Commissar of NKVD), V.N. Merkulov (People's Commissar of NKGB of the USSR), G.P. Dobrynin (Deputy Head of GULAG), P.M. Fokin (Head of NKGB of Crimea), V.T. Sergienko (Head of NKVD of Crimea). On May 18, 1944, the totalitarian communist regime forcibly removed the entire Crimean Tatar nation - over 430,000 persons - from their autochthonous territory. The occupying regime deprived Crimean Tatars of their lands, homes, property, means of subsistence and

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<sup>50</sup> Rayfield, "A Seditious and Sinister Tribe'," 290.

<sup>51</sup>К истории одного проекта, 2024.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20180505134723/http://moscow-crimea.ru/history/20vek/republic.html#4>

deliberately inflicted conditions of life calculated to bring about the physical destruction of the national group.<sup>52</sup> 46.2% of Crimean Tatars were killed within the first two years. International recognition of the 1944 genocide is growing. Ukraine recognized the 1944 Sürkün as genocide in 2015, and by 2025, similar decisions had been adopted by Lithuania (2019), Latvia (2019), Canada (2022), Poland (2023), Estonia (2023), the Czech Republic (2024), and the Netherlands (2025).<sup>53</sup> The European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe have condemned the 1944 Sürkün as a crime of genocide. This is genocide according to Articles II(a), II(b), II(c), II(d), and II(e) of the 1948 Convention.

The principle of state succession establishes the continuity of the international legal responsibility of the Russian Federation, as the successor state of the Russian Empire and the totalitarian communist regime, for the waves of genocides against the Crimean Tatars perpetrated by preceding regimes.

The recognition and legal qualification of these crimes demonstrate that every generation of Russia's leadership — from Catherine II to Vladimir V. Putin — has perpetrated genocides, each accompanied by a distinct *dolus specialis*: the specific intent to destroy the Crimean Tatar national, ethnical, racial, and religious group, in whole or in part, as such, through killings and through the deliberate infliction of conditions of life calculated to bring about the group's physical destruction.

Recognition in law of these genocides is a necessary precondition for ending the impunity of the Russian Federation.<sup>54</sup> Critically important for the application of international law is the fact that Crimean Tatars have preserved their national identity and political subjectivity.

Crimean Tatars have a popularly elected parliament, the Qurultay, and an executive representative body, the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar Nation.<sup>55</sup> In Ukraine, Europe, and the United States, there are over 200 Crimean Tatar civil society organizations and non-profit organizations. The World Congress of Crimean Tatars, the National Assembly of Crimean Organizations in Europe, and the Crimean Tatar Foundation

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<sup>52</sup> Цифри свідчать: за матеріалами самоперепису кримськотатарського народу (1966, 1971, 1973—1974 pp.). Історичні документи / укладач Бекірова З. — Сімферополь: КРП «Видавництво «Кримнавчпеддержвидав», 2012. — 13 с. — Російською та кримськотатарською мовами. УДК(093.2):31; ISBN 978-966-354-453-3

<sup>53</sup> Growing International Recognition of Crimean Tatar Genocide Contrasts with Russia's Escalating Oppression, 2025

<https://unpo.org/growing-international-recognition-of-crimean-tatar-genocide-contrasts-with-russias-escalating-oppression/>

<sup>54</sup> Crimean Tatar Resource Center, 2025, [https://ctrcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/lystivka-ukrayinska-mova-4\\_compressed.pdf](https://ctrcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/05/lystivka-ukrayinska-mova-4_compressed.pdf).

<sup>55</sup> Qurultay, 1991. <https://qtm.org/en/pro-kurultaj/>

USA represent the interests of the nation at the international level. Ukraine recognized Crimean Tatars as an indigenous people (2021), which ensures their rights enshrined in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007). Crimean Tatars continue to exercise the right to self-determination within the unitary state of Ukraine.

The international recognition of the genocide of Crimean Tatars, the proper investigation of each crime of genocide, and holding accountable the Russian Federation as the successor state and the individual perpetrators according to the Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (2001) and Articles III, IV, and VI of the 1948 Convention are necessary conditions for the restoration of justice, reparations for the victims and their descendants, restitution of confiscated lands, property, and cultural heritage, compensation for material and moral damages, satisfaction through official recognition and memorialization and guarantees of non-repetition and prevention of new crimes of genocide.

The restoration of the national-territorial autonomy of Crimea as the homeland of the Crimean Tatar nation within the unitary state of Ukraine is a form of implementation of Article I of the 1948 Convention, which obliges states to prevent the crime of genocide. This autonomy shall guarantee the physical security, political representation, and protection of the autochthonous nation of Crimea from the perpetration of new crimes of genocide.