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CRIMEA TODAY: TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

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The paper analyses some aspects of the situation in and around Crimea after the two years of its occupation and illegal annexation by the Russian Federation. The first part addresses the situation with human rights, especially those of the most vulnerable Crimean Tatar indigenous people and ethnic Ukrainians. It also covers some other negative trends resulting from changing the status of the territory. The second part provides analysis of the most important responses of the international community, whereas the third one deals with the national context of the Crimea-related issues.

More than two years have passed since the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) by the Russian Federation (RF) that was immediately followed by the illegal annexation of this part of Ukraine's territory by its neighbour. These events – unprecedented in the history of post-WWII Europe – signalled not only brutal violation and breach of international, but also a dramatic change in the whole architecture of the European and global security system.

While the bloody Donbas war (disguised under the name of the 'Anti-Terror Operation', or 'ATO') for some time averted national and international attention from the occupied peninsula, the current situation in the Crimea and its perception, accompanied by heated debates in mainland Ukraine and abroad, have become more topical over the last few months, especially after the beginning of the 'civic blockade' of Crimea and other developments that refocused the attention of the national and international media on Crimea¹.

Crimea: current situation

Many international and national human rights (HR) organisations are alarmed by the sharply deteriorating HR situation in the peninsula. Access by monitoring bodies is

¹ H. Coynash, Stop Feeding Bandits! Crimean Tatars call for a Civil Blockade of Occupied Crimea, "Права людини в Україні" (Human rights in Ukraine), 10 September 2015, [<http://khp.org/index.php?id=1441807392> access: 11 September 2015]; Protesting Tatars Block Roads to Ukraine from Crimea, "Transitions Online", 21 September 2015, [http://www.tol.org/client/article/24998-protesting-tatars-block-roads-to-ukraine-from-crimea.html?utm_source=TOL+mailing+list&utm_campaign=4ceb2b299c-TOL_newsletter_21_11_2014&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_35d0a711b5-4ceb2b299c-298180421 access: 22 September 2015]; Food Products Blockade Of Crimea: Belated Action Or A Challenge To The Grand Designs Of The Kremlin's Foreign Policy? "Democratic Initiatives Foundation", 21 September 2015, [http://dif.org.ua/en/publications/focus_on_ukraine/prodovolcha-bl-zadumam-kremlja_.htm access: 25 September 2015]; P.Goble, Crimean Tatar Blockade of Russian-Occupied Homeland 'Doomed to Fail,' Shekhovtsov Says, "Window on Eurasia", 15 October 2015, [<http://windowoneurasia2.blogspot.com/2015/10/crimean-tatar-blockade-of-russian.html> access: 20 October 2015]; M. Kovalenko, Month of Crimea blockade, "UNIAN", 28 October.2015, [<http://www.unian.info/economics/1166244-month-of-crimea-blockade.html> access: 30 October 2015]; Джемилев назвал основные результаты блокады Крыма (Djemilev named the main results of the Crimea's blockade), "Censor.net", 12 December 2015, [http://censor.net.ua/news/364883/djemilev_nazval_osnovnye_rezultaty_blokady_kryma access: 13 December 2015].

generally hindered by the *de facto* authorities of Crimea. Since the beginning of the occupation and up to date, only ‘unofficial’ Turkish delegation attended Crimea in April 2015²; there were also two visits by the Council of Europe representatives.³ Regular monitoring by international organisations is not yet possible, whereas activities of the Crimea Field Mission on HR consisting of Ukrainian and Russian human rights groups were stopped in June 2015 after this NGO had been included by the Russian Federation into the so-called ‘patriotic stop-list’.⁴ Nevertheless, reports based on the information collected from different sources clearly reveal brutal violations of all kind of human rights, targeting pro-Ukraine-minded people, particularly, members of the two most vulnerable ethnic groups – Crimean Tatars and ethnic Ukrainians: “Ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars who espouse pro-Ukrainian views on the status of Crimea or manifest a will to uphold their identity, especially their religious, cultural or linguistic rights, appear increasingly vulnerable, and are in urgent need of protection – an obligation borne first and foremost by the authorities exercising *de facto* control in Crimea”.⁵

Recorded cases include forced disappearances, murders, arrests, unlawful searches, interrogations, seizures of property, intimidation, and entry bans on political leaders and civic activists, in addition to brutally enforced Russian citizenship. The situation of the Crimean Tatars is further exacerbated by the intention to ban the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people (the main self-governing body of Crimean Tatars democratically elected by the delegates of Kurultay, the National Assembly) on charges of being an ‘extremist organisation’.⁶ This move may lead to a new wave of repressions targeting over two thousands members and persons affiliated with the network of local Mejlises. There are also grave concerns over the newly perpetrated detentions and arrests of Crimean Muslims on the suspicions of belonging to the Hizb ut-Tahrir – an international organisation recognised as ‘terrorist’ and banned in Russia but not in Ukraine.

Regarding the general dynamics on the occupied peninsula, it should be noted that the absence of reliable sociological data and the problems with ensuring free flows and exchange of information in both directions make objective and unbiased analysis an extremely difficult task. Mixed and often conflicting signals are coming via social

² “The Situation of the Crimean Tatars Since the Annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation”. Report prepared on the basis of information obtained during interviews conducted by an Unofficial Turkish Delegation in Crimea on 27-30 April 2015, 5 June 2015, [http://www.aa.com.tr/documents/AA/haber/crimea_report.pdf access: 10 June 2015].

³ Report by Nils Muižnieks, Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe Following His Mission in Kyiv, Moscow and Crimea from 7 to 12 September 2014. Strasbourg, 27 October 2014, [<https://wcd.coe.int/com.instranet.InstraServlet?command=com.instranet.CmdBlobGet&InstranetImage=2624575&SecMode=1&DocId=2197556&Usage=2> access: 20 February 2016]. The second mission, led by Swiss diplomat Ambassador Gérard Stoudmann, visited Crimea on 25-31 January 2016 to assess the human rights and rule of law situation. They had over 50 meetings in the peninsula, including with imprisoned Vice Chairman of the Mejlis Ahtem Chiygoz, as well as meetings in mainland Ukraine; the report is not yet published.

⁴ Крымская полевая миссия по правам человека из-за угроз меняет формат деятельности (Crimea human rights mission changes format of its activity because of the threats), “Ru.Crimea”, 09 September 2015, [<http://ru.krymr.com/content/news/27235360.html> access 20 September 2015].

⁵ Report of the Human Rights Assessment Mission on Crimea (6–18 July 2015). “OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights & High Commissioner on National Minorities”, 17 September 2015, p. 7-8; see also first monthly and then quarterly reports published by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), [<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Countries/ENACARegion/Pages/UARReports.aspx> access: 02 March 2016].

⁶ О. Pashayev, «Это нонсенс – преследование целого народа за экстремизм» – правозащитница (It’s a nonsense, to persecute the whole people for extremism), “Ru.Crimea”, 04 March 2016, [<http://ru.krymr.com/content/article/27589168.html> access: 05 March 2016].

networks and e-mail communications, and a more or less comprehensive ‘portrait’ remains elusive.

On the one hand, it is evident that growing prices on food and other products, corrupt and incompetent management by the *de facto* authorities, inefficient medical services etc. have resulted in the evaporation of earlier illusions and high expectations of those who hoped for much better life under Russia’s jurisdiction than under Ukraine’s. On the other hand, the paternalistic Soviet-type mentality typical for many local residents directs their dissatisfaction and irritation at either local or Ukrainian authorities. These people invest their hopes into attracting attention of almighty President Putin by sending him individual or collective letters requesting intervention to solve all of their problems (along the lines of ‘good Tsar, bad nobles’).

Demographic situation on the peninsula is also a matter of concern because numerous data evidence a process of replacement of its inhabitants by the newcomers from the mainland Russia – something similar to what has already being done once after the WW II and Crimean Tatars deportation by the Soviet authorities. This trend, if continued, would lead to the changes in ethnic composition of the population quite unfavourable for realising any plans of its reintegration.⁷

Last but not least is the problem of further militarisation of Crimea accompanied by Russia’s threats to deploy nuclear weapons on the territory of the peninsula. This process, having a distinct negative impact on economic and social life and on the fragile ecology of Crimea, constitutes also a significant threat to regional, European and global security.⁸

Crimea and international community

Although the decision to prolong sanctions imposed on Russia in 2014 after the illegal annexation of Crimea has been reached in 2015-2016 without serious debates or objections, position of the international community on Crimea issues is still far from unanimous. To some extent, leading politicians of the European and Euro-Atlantic space bear certain degree of responsibility for the Crimean ‘Anschluss’ that obviously breaches the ‘Budapest Memorandum’ of 1994 signed by the US and Great Britain which guaranteed Ukrainian security and territorial integrity in exchange to its nuclear status rejection. Also, it could be recalled that at the very beginning of the occupation, President Obama, as well as heads of a number of the EU member states, sent messages to Kyiv recommending to avoid military confrontation with Moscow. Although the lessons drawn from the Russia-Georgia war of 2008 may partly justify such advices, the hopes to temper in such a way Russia’s aggression have vanished in a course of further developments.⁹

Moreover, the presence of the members of both European far right and extreme left parties and organisations as ‘observers’ during the illegal ‘referendum’ in Crimea of 16 March 2014 demonstrated the splits existing between the pro-Putin lobbyists in the West and the mainstream politics. Not delving into the numerous evidence of further infringements by

⁷ E. Dostim, Перепись населения в Крыму: почему русских стало больше, а украинцев – меньше (Census in Crimea: why there become more Russians and less Ukrainians), “Ru.Crimea”, 23 March 2015, [<http://ru.krymr.com/content/article/26916490.html>] access: 25 March 2015].

⁸ I. Kabanenko (ex-deputy Minister of defence of Ukraine), The Crimean Knot: Untying or Cutting? Presentation at the International conference “Militarisation of the Occupied Crimea as an International Security Threat”, 14 March 2016, Kyiv.

⁹ J. Rogin, E. Lake, U.S. Told Ukraine to Stand Down as Putin Invaded, “Bloomberg”, 21 August 2015, [<http://www.bloombergview.com/articles/2015-08-21/u-s-told-ukraine-to-stand-down-as-putin-invaded>] access: 22 August 2015].

individuals and companies from different countries of the embargo rules and Ukraine's legislation concerning the occupied territory, it seems reasonable to pay more attention to the less overt disagreement between the major geopolitical actors and stakeholders – namely, international intergovernmental organisations –surfaced due to the Crimean crisis.

The UN reacted to the Russian invasion of Crimea and the official recognition of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC) and the city of Sevastopol as subjects of the RF by adopting on 27 March 2015 UNGA resolution 68/262). This non-binding document appeared after seven sessions of the UN Security Council (UNSC) convened to discuss the situation in Ukraine, and an eighth meeting when Russia, one of the UNSC permanent members, blocked action by voting against a draft resolution that would have urged countries not to recognize the results of the referendum in Crimea.

Although there were 100 votes in favour *versus* 11 against, there were a remarkable number of abstentions – 58 out of the 193-member of the UN. The resolution called on all States, international organizations and specialized agencies not to recognize any alteration of the status of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol on the basis of the 16 March referendum “and to refrain from any action or dealing that might be interpreted as recognizing any such altered status.”¹⁰

All subsequent reports by the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE contain references to this important document. However, little attention has been paid to its wording which never uses the terms ‘occupation’ or ‘illegal annexation’ and does not name Russia as an aggressor state directly responsible for all of those breaches of international law. Instead, the resolution “Urges all parties to pursue immediately the peaceful resolution of the situation with respect to Ukraine through direct political dialogue, to exercise restraint, to refrain from unilateral actions and inflammatory rhetoric that may increase tensions, and to engage fully with international mediation efforts.”¹¹

Moreover, in the last report on human rights violations in Ukraine prepared by the Office of the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR)¹² the section on Crimea contains some entries that could be perceived as an implicit recognition of Russia's *de facto* authority over Crimea. For example: “e) Ensure due process and fair trial rights for Crimean Tatars detained in relation to the February 2014 demonstration” or “g) Ensure respect for freedom of religion or belief and ensure that all procedures for registration are accessible, inclusive and not unduly burdensome” (thus encouraging religious organisations on the peninsula to seek registration according to legislation of the occupant state).

At the same time, the document severely criticises the ‘civic blockade action’ without any analysis of the underlying reasons or possible consequences – particularly, in terms of the de-occupation. It also recommends to the Government of Ukraine “n) Investigate all claims

¹⁰ Backing Ukraine's territorial integrity, UN Assembly declares Crimea referendum invalid, 27 March 2014, [<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47443&Cr=ukraine&Cr1=#.Vt2FEH2LTMx> access: 7 January 2016].

¹¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 27 March A/RES/2014 68/262 “Territorial Integrity of Ukraine”. [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/68/262 access: 03 March 2016].

¹² Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 November 2015 to 15 February 2016, “Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights”, [http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_13th_HRMMU_Report_3March2016.pdf access: 10 March 2016].

of human rights abuses committed during the ‘civil blockade’ on the administrative boundary line between mainland Ukraine and Crimea, and arrest perpetrators” (while never referring to the 4th Geneva convention of 1949 and its Art.55 which clearly states that: “...the Occupying Power has the duty of ensuring the food and medical supplies of the population; it should, in particular, bring in the necessary foodstuffs, medical stores and other articles if the resources of the occupied territory are inadequate”).¹³

Regrettably, the OHCHR report does not emphasise any specific (collective) rights of the indigenous Crimean Tatar people, focusing on individual rights only.

In contrast to this trend, the EU formulates its documents in a much more decisive way. In this context, the resolution of the European Parliament of 4 February deserves special attention. It not only reiterates the EU’s strong commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders, but: “1. ...recalls its severe condemnation of the illegal annexation by Russia of the Crimean peninsula and the commitment of the EU, its Member States and the international community to implement fully the policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea; highlights also that the restoration of Ukrainian control over the peninsula is one of the prerequisites for re-establishing cooperative relations with the Russian Federation, including the suspension of related sanctions”.¹⁴

Apart of this very important point and welcoming the Ukraine’s initiative to establish international negotiation mechanism on Crimea in the ‘Geneva plus’ format, the resolution unequivocally emphasises (three times) that Crimean Tatars are the indigenous people of Crimea whose rights should be strongly protected.¹⁵ Its p. 3 also “...calls for respect for the Mejlis as the legitimate representation of the Crimean Tatar community, and for avoidance of any harassment and systematic persecution of its members,” whereas p. 11 “Deplores the actions of the de facto administration to hinder the functioning of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar People, the highest executive and representative body of the Crimean Tatars, through the closure of its headquarters and seizure of some of its properties and through other acts of intimidation.” These points have become increasingly relevant with regard to the attempts of the occupying power to ban the Mejlis as an ‘extremist organisation’.

Concerning the economic blockade of Crimea, although not mentioning directly the actions undertaken either by civic activists or Ukraine’s government, p. 5 of the resolution “Recalls that the Russian Federation as an occupying power has the responsibility to ensure the safety of the whole population [of Crimea]”.

As can be seen from this brief comparative analysis, there is a serious discrepancy between the wordings used, on the one hand, by the UN, and on the other – by the EU. This

¹³ Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, 12 August 1949, [<https://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/7c4d08d9b287a42141256739003e636b/6756482d86146898c125641e004aa3c5?OpnDocument> access: 14 August 2015].

¹⁴ European Parliament resolution of 4 February 2016 on the human rights situation in Crimea, in particular of the Crimean Tatars (2016/2556(RSP)), Strasbourg, 4 February 2016, [<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P8-TA-2016-0043&language=EN&ring=P8-RC-2016-0173> access: 21 February 2016].

¹⁵ O. Loode, A Window to Europe for Crimean Tatars, “Minority Rights Group International”, 11 February 2016, [<http://minorityrights.org/2016/02/11/a-window-to-europe-for-crimean-tatars/> access: 12 February 2016].

difference may actually reflect a deeper controversy in regarding the future of Crimea, and further steps to be taken – or not taken – for the termination of the illegal annexation of the peninsula and returning it back to Ukraine.

Crimea and the mainland Ukraine

Occupation and immediate illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 caught Ukraine's interim government and society at large (as well as the international community) completely unprepared for such drastic turns. The worst anticipations of that time related to Crimea's declaring 'independence' from Ukraine and becoming a 'grey zone' or a one more unrecognised self-proclaimed pseudo-state like those emerging in the areas of 'frozen conflicts'. Initial shock and alarmingly vulnerable situation of Ukraine prevented timely elaboration of any coherent strategy in dealing with the occupied territory and its own citizens remaining there. That was followed – too soon – by the bloody war in the east of Ukraine distracting national and international attention from issues of the Crimea. The only decisive step taken by the Verkhovna Rada (VR, Parliament of Ukraine) was the adoption on 20 March 2014 of the Decree that recognised, eventually, the Crimean Tatars as the indigenous people of Ukraine and the Mejlis and Kurultay as their main organs of self-government. This document also stressed Ukraine's joining to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.¹⁶

In general, the state policies of Ukraine towards Crimea remain rather inconsistent, often confusing and stirring up severe criticisms and acute responses of civil society. A few state agencies responsible for the Crimea issues are usually understaffed and underfunded; legislation activities are also unimpressive. In particular, the first bill defining the rights and freedoms of persons on the occupied territory adopted on 15 April 2014 could be recalled: its initial version was so weak, full of different kind of shortages and non-compliances with the international standards that over the time passed, it was subjected to consecutive amendments as many as seven times.¹⁷

The most telling example of the inadequate Ukrainian policy is a story of the law on Free Economic Zone 'Crimea'¹⁸. This bill, adopted with much difficulties and irregularities, has met a strong resistance of the human rights and other civic activists who claimed that it actually recognises the Russia's jurisdiction over Crimea, creates comfortable conditions for big businesses continuing trade relations with subjects located on the occupied territory, and is very unfavourable for the internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Crimea – in particular, designating them as 'non-residents' that resulted in many negative consequences.¹⁹ Despite the promises of the several MPs and President Poroshenko to cancel or amend it fundamentally, this law is still formally in force.

¹⁶ Постанова № 4475 "Про Заяву Верховної Ради України щодо гарантії прав кримськотатарського народу у складі Української Держави" (Decree # 4475 "About the Statement of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine on guaranteeing the rights of the Crimean Tatar people within Ukrainian State), 20 March 2014, [<http://portal.rada.gov.ua/print/89891.html>] access: 25 March 2014].

¹⁷ Про забезпечення прав і свобод громадян та правовий режим на тимчасово окупованій території України (On securing the rights and freedoms of citizens on the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine), Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Law № 1207-VII, 15 April 2014, [<http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1207-18/paran81#n81>] access: 10 June 2014].

¹⁸ Law of Ukraine № 1636-VII of 12.08.2014, [<http://zakon4.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1636-18>] access: 03 March 2016].

¹⁹ For more details, see H. Coynash, Legislative Stab in the Back for Crimeans, "Human rights in Ukraine", 03 October 2014, [<http://www.khpg.org/ru/index.php?id=1412082838>] access: 15 October 2014].

The societal outrage was also caused by the contract on energy supplies from the mainland Ukraine to the occupied Crimea concluded between Ukraine and Russia and signed on 29 December 2014; according to it, presumably, the peninsula was officially recognised as the Russian territory.²⁰ The turmoil, following the launch on 12 October 2015 of the ‘energy blockade’ by civic activists, lasted until the end of 2015 when the term of the contract expired. Many national and international HR activists and politicians then accused Ukraine in violations of the international humanitarian law and bringing suffering to the population of Crimea. After the contract for 2016 was not resumed because of the Ukraine’s proposal to define in its text Crimea as Ukraine’s territory (unacceptable for the RF), those charges calmed down. Remarkably, a decision to reject renewal of the electricity supplies has been taken by Kremlin after a rush ‘sociological poll’ conducted among Crimean residents on December 31, 2015. According to its data published already on the next day, the overwhelming majority of the respondents expressed their willingness to sustain the respective inconveniences until energy supplies from Russia and own sources would be available.²¹

Recently, Crimean issues firmly returned to the national political agenda. A number of new initiatives were put forward, including the idea of establishing a ‘Geneva +’ format mentioned above, also compiling the ‘Chiyozy list’ (after the name of the arrested Deputy Chair of the Mejlis) analogous to that of ‘Savchenko list’ and using as an example ‘Magnitsky list’ approbated in the US. In 2016 – in contrast to the previous one – the second anniversary of the occupation (defined by the VR as started on 20 February 2014) was marked by numerous events at all levels – from the governmental and parliamentary events to informal street actions and flesh mobs; 26 February is now officially recognised as the Day of Crimean Resistance (to the occupation).

Conclusions

- The Crimean peninsula is rapidly becoming a territory of lawlessness where human rights of all pro-Ukraine minded persons and members of ethnic and religious minorities are brutally violated. The indigenous Crimean Tatars are subjected to especially hard pressure threatening to ‘squeeze’ them out of the peninsula and assimilate any remaining loyalists.
- Taking into account the above said, also deteriorating atmosphere of fear, frustration, mutual distrust and suspicions spreading on the peninsula, all formats of international negotiations/meetings on Ukraine should address not only the major problem of terminating the Donbas war (‘ATO’) but also issues relating to the de-occupation of Crimea. The Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, as a main self-government body of the indigenous people, should be engaged in all and any format as a full-fledged participant; as a subject not an object.

²⁰ Депутаты Логвинский и Джемилев требуют разорвать контракт на поставку электроэнергии в оккупированный Крым (MPs Logvinskyj and Djemilev demand to cancel the contract on electricity supply to the occupied Crimea). “Censor.net”, 19 November 2015, [\[http://censor.net.ua/news/361470/deputaty_logvinskiyi_i_djemilev_trebuyut_razorvat_kontrakt_na_postavku_elektoenergii_v_okkupirovannyj\]](http://censor.net.ua/news/361470/deputaty_logvinskiyi_i_djemilev_trebuyut_razorvat_kontrakt_na_postavku_elektoenergii_v_okkupirovannyj) access: 20 November 2015].

²¹ For more details, see K. Vepriytsky, Крымская «химия» с украинским электричеством (Crimean ‘chemistry’ with Ukrainian electricity), “Ru.Crimea”, 01 January 2016, [\[http://ru.krymr.com/content/article/27461731.html\]](http://ru.krymr.com/content/article/27461731.html) access: 12 January 2016]. See also: Poroshenko Says No More Power For Crimea Until Rejoins Ukraine, “Radio Liberty”, 15 January 2016, [\[http://www.rferl.org/content/poroshenko-says-no-more-power-for-crimea-until-rejoins-ukraine/27488931.html\]](http://www.rferl.org/content/poroshenko-says-no-more-power-for-crimea-until-rejoins-ukraine/27488931.html) access: 16 January 2016].

- The ‘Geneva+’ format, proposed by the Ukrainian President Poroshenko and supported by the resolution of the European Parliament of 4 February 2016, has a chance to be established and make a progress only if the Russian federation is somehow forced or persuaded to participate. Therefore, additional leverage might be identified and used (like a prospect of sanctions intensified instead of abolished).
- In view of a new wave of repressions in Crimea targeting primarily Crimean Tatars and Muslims of Crimea, Ukraine should insist on not only continuing Crimea-related sanctions against the RF and representatives of the Crimean occupational ‘authorities’ but on their intensification. Arguments focusing on the rights of Crimean Tatars as an indigenous people of Crimea – in particular on the right to self-determination in their homeland – should be used more assertively. For this to occur, the support of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues must be ensured.
- The issue of further militarisation of the occupied Crimea has become increasingly topical. This process converts the peninsula into the military base threatening regional, European and global security, instead of a tourist destination with another kind of ‘peaceful’ infrastructure. Unambiguous warning signals have to be sent to responsible international organisations and leaders of the democratic countries.
- Ukraine’s own policy towards occupied Crimea and the occupying state still lacks a strategic vision and practical steps for implementing previously adopted decisions; this weakens Ukraine’s position in the international arena and inflates demands and calls addressed to the outside world.
- By developing a coherent strategy of de-occupation of Crimea, Ukraine should demonstrate a political will not only aimed at ‘punishing’ the perpetrators but also to act on behalf of its citizens remaining on the occupied territory.
- Efforts should also be undertaken to harmonise and bring closer together views and approaches of the main actors – the UN, the EU, the US, Council of Europe and the OSCE. A more clear-cut and unified vision, including recognising the fact of occupation and annexation as such, will facilitate the application of the specific articles of the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949 relating to the situation in Crimea (primarily the most relevant Articles 49, 51, 55, and 70).

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