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## The Russian Occupation of Crimea in 2014: The Second Sürgün (The Soviet Genocide) of the Crimean Tatars

Sezai ÖZÇELİK \*

### Abstract

The response of the Crimean Tatars politicians, civil society, and nation toward the Russian occupation of Crimea is clear cut and obvious. They have condemned the Russian aggression toward the Ukrainian territorial integrity in national and international levels. This paper aims to analyze the current situation of the Crimean Tatars after the 2014 Crimean Crisis. It investigates how the Crimean Tatars conditions in their homeland have evolved under the Russian occupation forces for the last six years. In order to understand the current situation, it is necessary to examine the chosen trauma, the forced deportation (*Sürgün*) or Soviet Genocide that was ordered by Stalin in 18<sup>th</sup> May 1944. It has played a significant role to shape the Crimean Tatar national identity. Furthermore, the paper focuses on the repercussions of the Crimean crisis from political, social and international perspectives. In the last part, Turkey's reactions toward this regional conflict in the Black Sea region are evaluated.

**Keywords:** Crimea, Crimean Occupation, Crimean Tatars, Turkey, Russia, Crimea Annexation

**Jel Codes:** D74, F5, F51, F52, N44

## 2014 Yılında Kırım'ın Rusya Tarafından İşgali: Kırım Tatarları'nın İkinci Sürgünü (Sovyet Soykırımı)

### Öz

Kırım Tatar ulusunun, politikacılarının ve sivil toplumunun Rusya'nın Kırım'ı işgaline cevabı çok açık ve net olmuştur. Kırım Tatarları Rusya'nın Ukrayna toprak bütünlüğüne saldırısını ulusal ve uluslararası düzeylerde kınamışlardır. Bu çalışma, 2014 Kırım Krizi sonrası Kırım Tatarları'nın durumunu analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Kırım Tatarları'nın anavatanlarındaki şartlarının Rus işgal güçleri altında son altı yılda nasıl değiştiği incelemiştir. Şu andaki durumu anlamak için 18 Mayıs 1944'te Stalin'in emriyle gerçekleştirilen seçilmiş travma ya da Sürgün (Sovyet Soykırımı) anlamak ve araştırmak gereklidir. Ayrıca Kırım Krizi'nin politik, sosyal ve uluslararası bakış açılarından sonuçlarını da mercek altında almıştır. Son bölümde, Türkiye'nin Karadeniz bölgesindeki bu bölgesel çatışmaya tepkisi değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kırım, Kırım'ın İşgali, Kırım Tatarları, Türkiye, Rusya, Kırım'ın İlhakı

**Jel Kodu:** D74, F5, F51, F52, N44

\* Doç. Dr., Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi, İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi, Uluslararası İlişkiler Bölümü,  
ORCID ID: 0000-0003-0845-8465 sezaiozcelik@gmail.com ve sozcelik@karatekin.edu.tr

## INTRODUCTION

There is a chilling coincidence between Russian-involved conflicts and Olympics. When there was an Olympics event, Russia may have involved in regional conflicts. The Russia-Georgia conflict has started during the extravagant opening ceremony of the 29th Summer Olympic Games on August 8, 2008. Putin was in Beijing for the Olympics opening ceremony and Medvedev was on vacation. The conflict was initiated with shelling and bombardment by all Georgian troops on the city of Tskhinvali, the capital of South Ossetia on the early hours of August 8 (Svyatets 2016). The six-day war of Russia's massive military response was concluded with the recognition of the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia – two separatist regions of Georgia – by Russia. When the 2014 Winter Olympic Games were still carrying on in Sochi, the order of the Crimea occupation was given from Moscow on February 2014. Unlike the 2008 Georgian-Russian War, the Crimean occupation has almost been achieved without any artillery fire by using Putin's hybrid war strategy (Ozcelik 2016).

The Crimean Tatars, a Turkic and Muslim group, have been forcibly deported en masse by Stalin on 18 May 1944. As a chosen trauma, the event was called the “*Sürgün*”, namely forced deportation. They have waged peaceful and nonviolent struggle during the Soviet era and have returned to their homeland since 1989. According to the latest 2001 Ukrainian census, the numbers of the Crimean Tatars reached 243,433 out of the total of 2,033,700 that account for 12,1 percent of the Crimean population that is 6,4 times more than the 1989 census (Ukrcensus 2003). It should be underlined that the Crimean Tatar claim indigenous status for Crimea and their collective rights to be recognized under the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention No. 169 of 27 June 1989 Concerning Indigenous Peoples and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries (OHCHR 1989).

The Crimean Tatars were the one and only force to resist Putin's unilateral, illegal and unlawful invasion of the Green Peninsula (*Yeşil Ada*) on 26 February 2014. On that day, the leader of the Russian Union, Sergey Aksanyov and his followers gathered in front of the Crimean Parliament building chanting “Russia!” “Russia!”, and waving the Russian flags (Prentice 2014). Almost 12,000 Crimean Tatars also confronted the Russian demonstrators and pro-Russian parliamentarians particularly the Crimean Parliament President Vladimir Konstantinov planning to enter the building to vote for the unification of Crimea with Russia. While all Russians in front of the Crimean Parliament chanted “Glory to Russia”, the Crimean Tatars have been calling their crowd to “Calm Down” (*Cemaat Tokta*) (NTV 2014). On that day, the Crimean Tatars were able to stop the Russian invaders to enter the Parliament. However, the following night, mysterious 50 masked and unmarked Russian soldiers so-called “Little Green Men” entered the Crimean Parliament building. In the morning, 100 police and many Russia supporters gathered in front of the building. The homeland of the Crimean Tatars was lost overnight from relatively democratic pro-Western Ukraine to Putin's authoritarian Russia (Williams 2001).

After Crimea was occupied by the Russian armed forces, the annexation of Crimea has

begun with the referendum which was announced to be held on March 17, 2014. The official results of the referendum indicated that there was the attendance of the poll was 85 % (Walter 2014). Out of 97 % of the Crimean population voted in favour of accession to Russia (Huffingtonpost 2014). The Supreme Council of Crimea declared that Crimea is an independent state in accord to the result of the referendum. The same day, the Russian President Putin signed “Executive Order” so as to recognize Crimea by the Russian Federation. The following day in the Kremlin, there was a treaty signed which has already become a part of Russian territory (Meyers and Baker 2014). Unlike many other examples, all these transitory processes only aimed to integrate Crimea into Russia but not to achieve independent statehood of Crimea.

The annexation of Crimea that the decision was taken by the Russian Parliament (*Duma*) has not been recognized by the Crimean Tatars. Nonviolent strategy and civil disobedience tactics have been used to pressure the Russian political elites and public opinion about the unfair and unlawful act toward the Crimean sovereignty. Moreover, the Crimean Tatars have raised their demands in the international environment, particularly the Western capitals, post-Soviet countries and Turkey where a large number of the Crimean Tatar diaspora has lived since the end of 18th century. It should be mentioned that the Crimean Tatars have been used and will use only nonviolent methods to achieve their conflict resolution objectives.

The paper aims to analyze the current situation of the Crimean Tatars after the 2014 Crimean Occupation. In addition, it examines how the Crimean Tatars conditions have evolved under the Russian occupation forces for the last three years. In addition, the chosen trauma - the forced deportation (*Sürgün*) - has played a significant role to shape the Crimean Tatar national identity. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the Crimean crisis from political, social and international perspectives. In the last part, Turkey’s foreign policy actions are evaluated in this regional conflict with the specific emphasis of the Crimean Tatars. In conclusion, if the conflicting parties aim to find win-win and constructive solutions to the Crimean conflict, there should be a regional peace policy with a multi-level and multi-disciplinary analysis by using multi-track diplomacy.

## THE SITUATION OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS AFTER CRIMEAN OCCUPATION

The response of the Crimean Tatars politicians, civil society, and nation toward the Russian occupation of Crimea is clear cut and obvious. They have condemned the Russian aggression toward the Ukrainian territorial integrity and they have not recognized the annexation of Crimea by the decision of the Duma. Nonviolent strategy and civil disobedience tactics to pressure the Russian political elites have been used by the Crimean Tatars in order to get the support of international public opinion about the unjust and unlawful act. Moreover, the Crimean Tatars have raised their demands in the international environment, especially the Western capitals, post-Soviet countries and Turkey where a

large number of the Crimean Tatar diaspora has lived since the end of 18th century.

### 1. Political Dimension

One of the main Russian arguments to occupy Crimea was the violation of human rights of Russians who have lived in Crimea after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the occupation of Crimea in the spring of 2014, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) have found no evidence of discrimination but they reported human rights violations against Ukrainians and particularly the Crimean Tatars in Crimea. The Russian occupation authorities had carried out unlawful searches at the Tatar-language television station (ATR) and Ukrainian-language radio and television stations. Also, similar authorities have raided Islamic, Jewish (because there are Karaim Tatars who belong to Jewish faith), and Ukrainian religious and civic buildings such as the Crimean Tatars National Assembly (the *Qırım tatar Milli Meclisi*) as well as cemeteries have been targeted by Russian vandals. The Crimean Tatars mentioned that their homeland, Crimea, has become a place hard to live. Since the Ukrainian time, it could be said that Crimea has been a place for xenophobic activities and racist activities against the Crimean Tatars (OSCE 2015). After the Russian occupation, the Crimean Tatars relations with the local Russian authorities have been tense. One example was the Crimean political leader the Sergei Aksyonov who moved from the Transdnestr region of Moldova to Crimea in 1989. He was the leader of the neo-fascist *Russkoe Yedynstvo* (Russian Unity formerly called *Avanguard*). (Kuzio 2015: 271) After he became an acting head of the Crimean Republic, he prohibited the mass rallies in Crimea when the Crimean Tatars commemorated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Crimean Tatar deportation (Markedonov 2016). He was one of the Crimean politicians who declared the Crimean Tatars' self-governing body, the *Qırım tatar Milli Meclisi*, did not exist and threatened anyone in Crimea who incites ethnic hatred to be expelled (RFE/RL).

After the occupation of Crimea, the *Qırım tatar Milli Meclisi* insisted on that Turkey should participate in the Western sanctions against Russia. Furthermore, the Crimean Tatars representatives demanded the closure of the Straits to the Russian warship and Navy within the framework of the *Küçük Kaynarca* Treaty and other bilateral and multilateral agreement. In addition, the *Qırım tatar Milli Meclisi* appealed the Turkish authority to send Turkey's Navy and ships to the Black Sea. However, Turkey rejected these requests because of violation of the Montreux Convention and international maritime law. For the deployment of the Turkish Navy, Ankara's rejection was based on the absence of NATO decision. Both NATO and the US have sent their ships to the Black Sea for the reconnaissance missions after the conflict was spilled over to the Eastern Ukraine. These deployments were claimed to be mostly preventive measures for the Russian expansion and irredentist moves (Ozcelik and Karagul 2015).

After the illegal seizure and annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Russian Federation President Putin has addressed at the Russian Parliament Federation Assembly that is the upper chamber of Duma. Before that speech, Putin has phoned the Crimean Tatar leader

Mustafa Cemilev-Kırımoglu and after that, he met the Crimean Tatar representatives in Sochi and made following promises to the Crimean Tatars:

- In order to help the rehabilitation of the Crimean Tatars, the Russian authorities adopt one-year and five-year plans.
- To recognize the Crimean Tatar *qurultay* and other *qurultay*'s institutions such as the *Qırımatar Milli Meclisi*.
- To resolve the Crimean Tatars' legal, economic, land, and property problems.
- The cultural rights of the Crimean Tatars will be restored and protected
- To improve the education institutions in the Crimean Tatar language.
- To use the Crimean Tatar place and geographical names.
- To support the Crimean Tatar language press and mass media institutions (World Freedom Foundation 2015).

After past three years, the situation of the Crimean Tatars has deeply deteriorated in many aspects. First of all, there have been many unresolved crimes, especially kidnapping of the Crimean Tatars activists. The last kidnapping happened to Mr. Ervin Ibragimov who is the Crimean Tatars activist and the member of the Crimean Tatars World Congress Board of Directors. The Amnesty International and other human rights organizations condemned the kidnapping of Mr. Ibragimov by masked uniformed men. Second, the Crimean Tatars national representation organs – *qurultay* and the Crimean Tatars National Assembly (the *Qırımatar Milli Meclisi*) – activities have been suspended “to prevent anti-Russian acts and to oppose the Russian Federal laws” on 13 April 2016. Then, the Crimea's Supreme Court totally banned the *Qırımatar Milli Meclisi* “due to its extremist activities” on 26 April 2016 (Guardian 2016). The third aspect, two important Crimean Tatars national leaders, Mustafa Cemilev-Kırımoglu and Refat Chubarov, both of whom are the members of the Ukrainian Parliament (*Verkhovna Rada*) have been imposed prohibition to enter Crimea on 22 April 2014 for the next five years until 2019. In a reaction of such prohibition against two leaders, the Turkish Foreign Ministry has harshly condemned all Russian activities against the Crimean Tatars.

## **2. International Dimension**

The Crimean Crisis in 2014 could be categorized as “frozen conflict” or “contested states”. Interestingly, other frozen conflicts such as Transnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, South Ossetia, Abkhazia and even Kosovo have been related to the Russian foreign policy strategy (Özçelik 2016a). The occupation of Crimea has shown that the world has witnessed giving birth into new frozen conflict with important repercussions for international peace and

security. Such frozen conflict could be a chosen strategy by Putin's Russia to test the West's international role. It has become an important reality for the international relations of the United States and EU. The role of EU in the international recognition of Kosovo is an interesting topic to understand the Crimean Crisis. The occupation of Crimea has once again demonstrated that Russia can use its military forces against its neighbors to pursue her foreign policy ambitions with its hardline nationalist approach.

The reactions of the world towards the occupation of Crimea have been using sticks not carrots by punishing Russia mostly with international economic and political sanctions. Two most important countries of Europe, Germany, and France, have portrayed relatively less sharp responses to Russia's aggression than the Eastern European countries (Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and the Baltic Republics) (Özçelik 2016b). Despite Germany has had a dependency on Russian gas and continued strong economic relations, the Chancellor Merkel has initiated strong sanctions against Russia. However, the Chancellor stressed that the territorial integrity of Ukraine can be achieved without including Crimea (Özçelik 2016c). Similarly, France had to cancel two Mistral types warships deal that Russia has already made the payment in order to modernize the Black Sea Fleet. International pressures to France including US President Barack Obama have urged Paris to "press the pause button" on the warship deal with Russia (France 24 2016).

On the other point of view, many far-right European parties (France's National Front, Austria's and the Netherlands's Freedom Party, Bulgaria's *Ataka* Party, Greece's Golden Dawn, and United Kingdom's UKIP) and some leftist party (Greece's *Syriza* and Spain *Podemos*) has supported or silenced to Russian aggressive acts against Crimea and Ukraine due to Kremlin has funded them to implement Putin's hybrid war or II. (Second) Cold War strategy (Telegraph 2016). Regarding the reactions of the world community, it is necessary to emphasize that some states have recognized the illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by Russia. The seven states that recognized Crimea is a part of the Russian Federation are as follows: Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, Syria, Afghanistan, Nauru, and Venezuela. Additionally, other non-state entities such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh have backed up the Russian claims about Crimea and Sevastopol (Attia 2014).

It is crucial to analyze the Chinese response to Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014. It was the most challenging issue that has tested two important world powers' cordial relations. Reminded that China was against Russia's recognition of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia because one of the most important pillars of the Chinese foreign policy depends on the principles of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity. Although Russia and China define their relationship as the strategic partnership, China's reaction to the Russian invasion of Crimea has been quite diplomatic by showing her neutrality. The statement of the Chinese foreign ministry emphasized the political resolution of the Ukraine crisis and urged all conflicting parties to restrain themselves and avoid escalatory moves (Kreutz 2015). From the Chinese point of view, the Crimean occupation can be seen as a serious threat to its state unity and national security considering that Russia's

actions encourage separatism and become a precedent for future international crises. On the other hand, the Ukrainian crisis was a complex issue from the Chinese point of view since Beijing consider the Maidan Revolution as “a Western-led conspiracy” (Kaczmarek 2015). As a result, the Chinese policy-makers have avoided choosing either Russia or the Western position for the Crimean crisis (Özçelik 2016d). In the UN Security Council, Beijing generally used the abstain votes in order to neither condemn nor support Russia’s actions (Tiezzi 2014).

The type of Russian behavior in Crimea and Ukraine can be described as total aggressiveness and lack of cooperation that was similar to the Russia-Georgia crisis of 2008. In the middle term, the economic sanctions and the small military escalatory moves may cause flawed results. After the Russian-Georgian ceasefire negotiations, the EU began cooperation talks with Russia and the United States pushed the reset button for the relations with Russia in 2009. Since the 9/11, Russia has become the West’s closest allies on War of Terror. In the name of cooperation against the threat of Islamic extremism, Russia and the West put aside their differences and accept Putin’s hardline nationalist aspirations.

### **3. Social Dimension**

The Crimean Tatars have employed nonviolence and civil disobedience tactics in order to return their homeland and take back their fundamental rights since the Soviet Union time. For example, when Mikhail Gorbachev was in power, a group of the Crimean Tatars has done unexpected and courageous protest and defiance acts against the Soviet repression and oppression on 23-24 July 1987 at the heart of Moscow in the Kremlin and the Red Square (Bohdan and Swoboda 1990). After the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the Crimean Tatars have again employed “Sharpian nonviolent strategies” with peaceful demonstrations. The Russian occupation authorities have used intimidation tactics including imposing 23,000 Dollars fine who attend any protest activities against the Russian Crimean authorities (QHA 2014). The Crimean Tatars language TV station (ATR) had its broadcast license revoked and moved its studios to Kyiv (Goncharenko 2016). Many Crimean Tatars homes and businesses have been raided by the Crimean security forces (Coffey 2015). Human Rights Watch and other international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have reported that Russians have cracked down the Crimean Tatars mosques and religious schools (*medrese*) and confiscated many religious books including the Muslims’ holy book the Qur’an (Human Rights Watch 2014). Also, Russia has forced the Crimean Tatars to accept the Russian citizenship and passport with the “passportization process”. Approximately 15,000 out of 300,000 Crimean Tatars have moved from the Peninsula after one year of the occupation as they viewed this experience as the second forced deportation (*İkinci Sürgün*) (Paul 2015).

Diasporas are pressure groups who find the potential allies such as academics, journalists, media persons, civil society organizations, and other diaspora groups in order to work on the lobbying mechanisms for building transnational coalitions and bridging. Diasporas attempt to influence foreign policy outcomes and decisions toward their homeland

(Perazzi 2011). It was the first time in their history, the Crimean Tatars diaspora in Turkey has played a much active role in Turkish foreign policy. Similarly, the Chechen and the Kosovar Albanian diaspora, the Crimean Tatars diaspora has been transformed from passive into active with pro-active lobbying activities. Since the seizure of Crimea in 1783 by Russia, most of the Crimean Tatars have been forced to immigrate “*Aktopraklar*” or Turkey. There are approximately 5 million Crimean Tatars in Turkey and another 250,000 inhabited in Romania because of escaping from Russian oppression, persecution, and tyranny for the last 200 years (Mack and Surina 2005). There are other diaspora groups in Turkey such as Volga Tatars, the Caucasians and Bashkirs fled from the Russian aggression. The total number of diasporas that emigrated from Tsarist Russia/Soviet Republics to Turkey could be more than 17 million people. As a result, there are powerful lobbies that can influence not only Turkish-Russian relations but also Turkish-Ukrainian-Russian trilateral relationship.

The Crimean Tatars in Turkey have supported the idea that the Crimean Tatars have legitimate demands towards Crimea since they claim that the Crimean Khanate has ruled there for 360 years. The occupation of the Crimea by Russia had tremendous significance for political developments of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey. The diaspora has intensified its lobbying activities not only in Turkey but also all over the world. The World Crimean Tatar Congress has raised the Crimean Tatar cause in international organizations, non-governmental organizations and important world state capitals (QHA 2015a). The Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey has played an important role with exiled Crimean Tatar leadership lobbying the Turkish government to support efforts to end the occupation of Crimea by the Russian authorities. At the anniversary of the occupation of Crimean every February, the Crimean Tatars diaspora in Turkey has organized demonstrations of solidarity with their co-patriots. With the help of the diaspora, the Tatar issue has become a domestic political issue in Turkey (Balcer 2015).

## TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY AND THE CRIMEAN TATARS

Turkey has followed “middle road approach” about the Crimea and Ukrainian Crisis up until the shooting down the Russian plane near the Turkish-Syrian border. Turkey’s position was clear about two issues: She supports the territorial integrity of Ukraine and she declared not to recognize the seizure and annexation of the Crimean Peninsula. Also, Turkey has voted in favor of supporting the United Nations General Assembly decision about the territorial integrity of Ukraine on 27 March 2014. The Turkish foreign policy makers stated several times that Turkey does not recognize the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation through illegal and illegitimate “referendum” held in Crimea on March 2014. Also, Turkey strongly supports Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and de-facto situation (Turkish Foreign Ministry 2016). However, Turkey’s stance about Crimea can be viewed from realist perspective of international relations. The regional *realpolitik* is a significant deterministic factor for Turkey’s foreign policy toward Crimea



and Crimean Tatars.

Turkey has demanded the diplomatic explanation of the Crimean Tatars situation after Russian aggressive and provocative actions. As a fact-finding mission, Turkey sent a committee to Crimea. The committee prepared a report titled as “the Situation of the Crimean Tatars after the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation” (Anadolu Agent 2015). In the report, it is stated that the Russian Federation has violated basic human rights of the Crimean Tatars during the occupation of Crimea on 27 February 2014, the referendum on 16 March 2014 and the annexation decision of the Russian Federation on 18 March 2014. Particularly, freedom of speech and free press, language and education rights, the right of property, the right to fair trial, the right of dwelling were violated and the Crimean Tatars were forced to choose the Russian citizenship and Russian passport (QHA 2015b).

Turkey’s middle road approach has begun to change when Putin visited the Armenian capital, Erivan for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the so-called Armenian Genocide / the 1915 Incident. As a result, the Second World Crimean Tatar Congress was held in Ankara between 1-2 August 2015. All the Crimean Tatars united under the same framework by inviting 184 Crimean Tatar civil society organizations from 12 different countries with 480 delegates. In the Congress, the Crimean Tatars decided to support in all international platforms the territorial integrity of Ukraine and voiced their objection to the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. Also, they believed that Turkey should play the more constructive role for the solution of the Crimean crisis (Yilmaz 2015).

Turkey’s reactions against the occupation of the peninsula can be evaluated within the realist and neo-realist perspectives. Since the 2014 Crimea Crisis, Turkey has supported the territorial integrity of Ukraine and refused to recognize the unlawful annexation of Crimea by Russia. She has declared the Ukraine Crisis should be resolved within the framework of international law and diplomatic tools and the rights and interests of the Crimean Tatars should be guaranteed (TC Disisleri Bakanligi July 2016). After two months of the referendum in Crimea on March 2014, Turkey has given moral support to the Crimean Tatars by inviting their national leader Mustafa Cemilev-Kırımoglu to receive the “Republic Medal” from the President Abdullah Gul (Anadolu Ajansı 2014). Another important support was to treat the Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Cemilev-Kırımoglu in a state level protocol and made a press conference with the ex-Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu (TC Disisleri Bakanligi March 2014). The first time in Turkish history, three main parties have included the Crimean Tatar in their election declarations (AKP 2015; QHA 2015c; QHA 2015d).

The above mentioned Turkish policy toward the Crimean Tatars may be categorized as positive developments. Nevertheless, Turkey has mostly followed a balanced policy about the Crimean Crisis because of her dependence on Russian energy, tourism, trade, and economy. Turkey has refused to participate in the Western-led economic sanctions against Russia. Many states such as Canada, Norway, Australia, Japan, and Switzerland

have applied bilateral sanctions against Russia (European Parliament 2015). Moreover, Turkey has intensified her relations with Russia during this era. Even Russia abandoned energy pipeline project with the Western bloc, both Turkey and Russia have proposed the “Turkish Stream” pipeline project in order to transfer Russian oil and gas into the Western market via Turkey. Moreover, Russia has given six percent sale to Turkey on gas trade and has been awarded to the Akkuyu nuclear plant tender. Briefly, Turkey has used the opportunity to increase its economic relations with Russia. Turkish businesspeople have signed 12,5 billion dollars investment agreement with Russia in Crimea. Also, in August 2015, Crimean Turkish Businessmen Council was established (Hurriyet 2015). In short, the Turkish-Russian relations have been very friendly and cooperative up until shooting down the Russian warplanes by the Turkish fighter pilots in the Turkish airspace.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, first the Russian illegal and unlawful first occupation and then the Russian hybrid war (Özçelik 2016e) tactics together with the annexation of Crimea by controversial referendum have negatively affected the stability and peace in the Black Sea and Caucasus regions. The Western powers, in essence, the United States and the European Union, have implemented failed soft power tactics and sanctions-based policy.

After Crimea, Russia has entered the Syrian conflict as the main player in order to show its irredentist and expansionist desires with her military and political muscles in the backyard of Turkey and the Middle East region. The Russian policy in Crimea and Syria can be labeled as “double containment policy” toward Turkey. The occupation of Crimea was the first containment action of Turkey from the northern side. The Russian military intervention in Syria could be seen as the second containment of Turkey from the southern flank. The close relationship between Russia and Armenia and Russia and Iran could be interpreted as the part of the northern and southern containment policy toward Turkey. The continuation of tension and instability in Crimea and Syria has given geopolitical, geo-economical and geo-strategical advantages to Russia in the Black Sea, Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Middle East. In order to achieve foreign policy objectives, Russia has had good relations with Iraq, Iran, and Armenia in order to pressure Turkey (Özçelik 2016f).

The Turkish main foreign policy toward Crimea and the Crimean Tatars has been “balanced realist constructivism” that combines realist power and geo-political/geo-economical/geo-strategic parts with the constructivist identity, values, international norms and regimes and decision-making processes. Apart from above realist moves, Turkey has supported the Ukrainian territorial integrity (international norm), the resolution of crisis within international law and diplomacy (peace value) and the defending human security of the Crimean Tatars by respecting their human rights and freedoms. Because Turkey and Russia have inter-dependent relations in many areas including mixed families, energy, economy, trade and tourism, both sides may use dialogue and diplomatic solutions to

resolve their differences in many foreign policy issues. One indicator is the voting of extension of Russian sanctions at the European Council Parliament Assembly (ECPA) in January 2015. A sum of 10 Turkish parliamentary representatives at EUPA, four of them rejected the extension of sanctions, four of them used absentee votes and only two of them supported the continuation of sanctions against Russia (QHA 2015e).

The only resistance to the Russian occupation of Crimea has come from the Crimean Tatars with nonviolent tools. The Crimean Tatars have made big differences on the ground and made harder for Russia to control Crimea in comparison to South Ossetia and Abkhazia. When the Russian armed men took over the Crimean Parliament on February 26, the Crimean Tatars held a large rally in front of the Parliament and successfully opposed to Russian takeover and repelled pro-Russian separatists from the Parliament (Oxana 2014). The Crimean Tatars have suffered during the forced deportation (*Sürgün*) and exile during the Soviet time. When the Little Green Men entered Crimea on March 2014, the memories of the past chosen trauma have resurfaced again and the fear of second forced deportation has forced to flee thousands of the Crimean Tatars to the Ukraine. Also, Putin who came to power in 1999 and crushed Chechen independence bid with an iron fist makes the remaining Crimean Tatars prospect of living constant oppression and tyranny under the new Russian rule. The Soviet and Russian governments have had an intense interest in the Crimea region since the 1700s. The Crimean Peninsula is still very important geopolitically and geostrategically not only for Russia but also for all countries in the Black Sea region (Kireççi and Tezcan 2016).

The national aspirations of the Crimean Tatars are closely linked to the territory of Crimea because of their historical, religious and linguistic ties. The national identity of the Crimean Tatars cannot be separated from their actions of the national movements (Öğretir and Özçelik 2008). Within the Crimean Tatar context, the understanding of the current situation is necessitated with the emphasis on the national awakening, survival, and identity of the Crimean Tatars that is intertwined with the deep-rooted effects of the *Sürgün* that was labeled as the *Soviet Genocide* by Williams in his book title (2001).

All Crimean Tatars felt—and still feel—a strong sense of belonging to this distinct national community because they all bonded a common chosen trauma. The Crimean Tatars are all suffered from the forced deportation (*Sürgün*). The political nature of this identity has been significantly strengthened over the course of Soviet Communist rule. The Soviet authorities have attempted to diminish the effect of the Crimean Tatar identity by continuing to demonize and dehumanize the Crimean Tatars in Central Asia. The counter pressure of the Soviet authorities resulted in the assertion of the Crimean Tatar nationhood through acts of protest against the central government and its various mechanisms of social control with nonviolent tools and strategies. It is safe to say that the Crimean Tatar national narrative is a product of Crimean Tatar hands, making it a more profound driver of national unity.

The situation of the Crimean Tatars is further complicated by the fact that they have been

squeezed because of the power struggles among big powers the United States, the European Union, and Russia as well as regional powers such as Ukraine, Turkey. Also, the Crimean Tatars have been seen wrongly as so-called Islamist jihadists with the existing biases by the Russian society and the Russian mass media has played the Western concern about the rising so-called “Islamic terrorism” to put the Crimean Tatars as a part of the worldwide jihadist terrorist network. The Crimean Tatars will never declare jihad on Russia because they have always used nonviolent and peaceful methods to return their homeland and get back their fundamental human rights and freedoms. However, the xenophobia and Islamophobia have increased not only in Russia but also in the Western and Central regions of Ukraine because most of the Crimean Tatars have migrated to those regions and “the major part of the population is known for its religiosity and are mostly Greek Catholics” (Brylov 2016). Also, it should be mentioned that the Crimean Tatars have been structurally discriminated by the Ukrainian government until the 2014 Crimean Crisis. Moreover, they have seen little or no political, economic and social improvement in their situation under the Ukrainian rulers during the post-Cold War period. For example, the Ukraine has accepted the Crimean Tatars’ rights to return to the Crimean Peninsula from exile, but she has not given a full citizenship in order to integrate them into the Crimean society. Most of the Crimean Tatars have obtained the Ukrainian citizenship and voted the first time in the 2002 elections and seven Crimean Tatars achieved to become the member of the Crimean Supreme Council (Kuzio 2015).

In 1994-1995, the almost identical crisis has taken place between Ukraine and the Russian-supported Crimean authorities. The crisis has been resolved with a cooperative agreement with the help of successful third party intervention and fact-finding missions, namely the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) – the High Commissioner of National Minorities (HCNM), Mr. Max van der Stoep. The absence of the democratic and peace-loving Western powers reactions has resulted in the beginning of fearful, oppressive and lonely living conditions for the Crimean Tatars for the last three years. Unfortunately, the Crimean conflict has been evolving toward “frozen conflict” category and becoming deep-rooted and protracted ethnic conflict at the heart of Europe. Although most international relations specialists have analyzed the 2014 Crimean Crisis with geo-political, geo-strategic and geo-economic factors, both Russians and Crimean Tatars have psycho-historical and psycho-analytical roots and origins toward Crimea. In order to find win-win and constructive solutions to the Crimean conflict, there should be a regional peace policy with a multi-level and multi-disciplinary analysis by using multi-track diplomacy.

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