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**Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial** works on protection of the rights of discriminated minorities and migrants in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, carrying out monitoring, reporting, advocacy on local and international level, opposing discrimination by litigation and human rights education.

## **Input to the report on "Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities"**

*31 March 2021*

In the present submission Anti-Discrimination Centre Memorial provides brief information regarding violation of the rights of some ethnic minorities in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, namely Crimean Tatar people in the annexed Crimea Peninsula; Roma in Russia; linguistic and indigenous peoples in Russia; Mugat (Roma-like community living in ex-USSR Central Asian countries); ethnic minorities of Tajikistan (Pamiri, a group of peoples living in Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast, and a small minority of Yaghnobi); Dungan minority in Kazakhstan; Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan.

### **Main Conclusion**

In all the situations considered, violations of the rights of ethnic minorities occur due to the state's "national policy", contrary to the guarantees and agreements listed in the Declaration on the Rights of Minorities, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other respective international documents. These violations are systemic in nature, so the UN Human Rights bodies should call on the authorities of these countries to respect the rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities. Special attention should be paid to the rights of indigenous peoples and those minorities who do not have statehood / autonomy and are therefore not sufficiently recognized by the authorities of the countries where they live.

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## **Discrimination of Crimean Tatars in the annexed Crimea: Violation of linguistic and cultural rights**

**Restriction of use of the Crimean Tatar language in public sphere.** On May 24, 2017, the Russia-controlled Crimean parliament adopted a law enshrining equal rights for three state languages: Russian, Ukrainian, and Crimean Tatar. The law proclaimed freedom to choose a language, the right to an education in one's native language, government support for the development of state languages, and the use of all three state languages prior to and during elections, when laws of the Republic of Crimea are published, and in the work of federal and local state bodies, local bodies, and other institutions. Russian is required in some areas (official paperwork, court proceedings, notary paperwork, publication of regulations aside from laws of the Republic of Crimea, etc.), while the Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar languages "may" be used. In reality, the Russian language predominates, and only a few forms and tables giving the names of state institutions are published in all three languages. The websites, regulations, and publications of the de facto Crimean parliament and other government bodies are not available in Ukrainian or Crimean Tatar.

In 2016, the de facto Crimean authorities announced that the historical Crimean Tatar names of localities would be restored. But this initiative was never seen through, and very few of these signs exist. On the contrary, Crimean Tatars are never consulted on the names of streets, schools, and day cares in their close-knit neighbourhoods.

**Restriction of use of the Crimean Tatar language in educational system** Crimea had 16 schools offering instruction in the Crimean Tatar language in the 2020-2021 academic year (247 classes with 4,861 students). Crimean Tatar language classes have been also opened in schools providing instruction in Russian (22 schools, 119 classes, 1,809 students). Within a total of 547 public and private general education institutions in the Republic of Crimea with 218,974 students, 212,090 of them (96.9 percent) receive instruction in Russian and 6,700 (three percent) are taught in Crimean Tatar, which is 14 classes (344 students) more than in the 2019-2020 academic year.

The low number of students learning in their native languages (three percent) as compared to the number of ethnic Crimean Tatars living in Crimea stems from Crimea's intentionally destructive language policy. Every year lawyers and human rights defenders record large-scale violations of the right to education in one's native tongue right before the start of the school year in Crimea. School administrations use psychological pressure (lowering grades for no reason, making it difficult to take standardized tests) and manipulation ("no textbooks or teachers, no free classrooms") to deter parents from having their children study in their native languages. There have been cases documented where children were rejected from a school after their parents selected Crimean Tatar and their native language. The situation in kindergartens is similar.

Parents' appeals to education agencies and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Youth do not bring about any managerial decisions regarding conflicts between parents and school and day care administrations that refuse to offer instruction in or study of a native language.

Free use of the Crimean Tatar language in the education system is such a sensitive topic that any attempts by teachers and civic activists to discuss it are opposed by the de facto government. In 2019, the conference "Education in the Crimean Tatar Language: Problems and Prospects," which was supposed to bring together over 80 teachers of Crimean Tatar language and literature to discuss pressing problems with teaching this language in Crimea, was prevented from going forward because of pressure from the authorities. Even forms of popularizing the Crimean Tatar language like children's competitions, which independent Crimean Tatar social organizations used to hold annually, had been unofficially banned and then cancelled.

**Obstacles for theatre activity in Crimean Tatar language.** In August 2018, it became known that head and artistic director of the Crimean Tatar Academy of Musical and Dramatic Theater Bilyal Bilyalov had been fired. The official reason for his dismissal was the "inappropriate use of funds," but Bilyalov himself said that he was not able to recover his position through court and that he was fired because he refused to "obey all the authorities' orders." Almost 20 actors and employees left the theater along with Bilyalov in protest. The staff members who quit went on to found the independent Crimean Tatar Altyn Beshik Theater. The authorities systematically obstruct their work by interfering in agreements between the theater and the venues it uses. For example, in January 2019

spaces in Evpatoria and Dzhankoy, Lenin Region turned down the theater, privately citing calls from de facto state bodies.

**Repressions against independent media in Crimea.** With rare exceptions, after 2014 Crimean Tatar media outlets shut down or lost their independence. The Crimean Tatar editorial office of Krym channel was closed, and the pro-government channel Millet started broadcasting from its studios. It broadcasts at least twice as much content in Russian than in Crimean Tatar and its website does not have a Crimean Tatar version. The radio station Meydan stopped broadcasting on 31 March 2015, with the television stations ATR and QHA following suit the next day because the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (Roskomnadzor) rejected their registration and prohibited them from broadcasting in Crimea. The weekly Avdet received its rejection from Roskomnadzor on 1 April 2015. It was forced to reduce circulation to 999 copies (the maximum circulation allowed without registration). By this time, editor-in-chief Shevket Kaybullayev had already received four warnings from Russian security officers about extremist activities. Qırım, the only independent newspaper still published in the Crimean Tatar language, is under threat due to repeated warnings from Roskomnadzor. All the national publications but the abovementioned Qırım and Avdet newspapers are part of the Gasprinsky State Mediacenter financed by the de facto State Committee on Interethnic Relations, which makes it possible for the government to control and censor publications and dictate their agenda.

**Destruction of monuments of cultural and historical heritage.** Since large-scale construction is underway in Crimea, archeological digs are going on all over the peninsula to save cultural and historical heritage. The Russian media reported on “millions of finds” by archeologists during the construction of the Crimean Bridge, but independent specialists have not been able to determine the true value and fate of these objects. According to the Crimean Strategic Research Center (Ukraine), at least 90 archeological sites were destroyed during the construction of the Tavrida Highway. Activists and human rights defenders say that items and museum pieces have been taken out of Crimea (mainly to Moscow and Saint Petersburg).

Unprofessional repair work that compromised the authenticity and integrity of the 16th century Bağçasaray Palace of the Crimean Khans, which is on UNESCO’s tentative World Heritage list, is cause for serious concern.

Objects sacred to the Crimean Tatar people are being desecrated and destroyed. These objects include not only gravestones at Crimean Tatar cemeteries, but also plaques commemorating Crimean Tatars who died during World War II or displaying Crimean Tatar symbols. Acts of vandalism become pick up before commemorative dates connected with the deportation in 1944. Crimean activists say that 23 cases where Crimean Tatar holy objects were vandalized have been recorded in the six years since annexation. The law enforcement refused to open criminal cases on those facts.

It has been reported that former Crimean Tatar cemeteries have been developed and that remains have not been treated properly during digs (2019, a cemetery at the location of the former village of Ungut in Kirov District; a cemetery in in Simferopol’s city garden).

**Amplification of Russian propaganda using monuments in Crimea.** At the same time, the Crimea is experiencing what experts call a “boom in monuments”: At least new 150 monuments were identified between 2014 and 2020. Most of these were openly used to promote Russia’s government ideology and “symbolically anchor the peninsula in Russia.” The installation of statues and monuments is approved by local bodies of the de facto government without public discussion. The erection of a monument to the leaders of the Big Three, including Stalin, in Livadiya in 2015 despite numerous objections by Crimean Tatar activists was particularly offensive, as was the installation of a statute of Empress Ekaterina II, who Crimean Tatars see as a symbol of the persecution and destruction of their statehood, in Simferopol in 2016.

Crimean Tatar national symbols, imagery, and heritage and attributes of Crimean Tatar identity are being used to shape the pro-Russia discourse. For example, in 2017 Crimea’s de facto parliament approved a medal named after the distinguished Crimean Tatar educator Ismail Gasprinsky. Aleksandr Formanchuk, deputy chair of the Public Chamber of Crimea, one of the creators of the “list of Crimea haters” (a dossier on politicians, journalists, and public figures who did not recognize Crimea’s annexation), was awarded this medal in 2020 for “a significant personal contribution to the cultural and spiritual development of the peoples of Crimea.” Thus, the

government's actions (awarding a medal to recognize the service of a Crimean Tatar figure) appear positive at first glance, but are actually offensive to Crimean Tatars.

**Discouragement of commemorating important dates and holding cultural events.** Since 2014, just before Remembrance Day for the Victims of the Deportation of the Crimean Tatars on 18 May 1944, representatives of the prosecutor's office have issued warnings not to hold unauthorized rallies or demonstrations to activists and human rights defenders. In 2020, warnings were handed out right before May 3 (planned for the March of Dignity, which was postponed), May 18 (Remembrance Day), and June 26 (Crimean Tatar National Flag Day). The de facto Crimean government has banned any independent public actions, both sociopolitical and cultural. At the same time, the de facto government is trying to create the illusion that Crimean Tatars can exercise their cultural rights. For example, government agencies have organized celebrations of Hidirellez for several years, even though Crimean Tatars themselves do not attend these events, which are required for state service workers.

## **Violations of linguistic and cultural rights of indigenous peoples in Russia**

The character of violations of the rights of indigenous peoples in Russia allows to state that they face systemic discrimination. International organizations have repeatedly noted that the Russian government is not fulfilling its obligations to protect the rights of indigenous peoples: national laws are declarative in nature and do not provide for procedures for the exercise of indigenous rights; the specially protected status is too narrow – in Russia, it only applies to “small indigenous” peoples numbering less than 50,000 people.

Despite a number of efforts by the state after declaration of 2019 as the Year of Native Languages, the situation of indigenous languages remains deplorable, because the natural habitat of indigenous peoples and, accordingly, the environment for the functioning of native languages is disappearing. The languages of small-numbered peoples are particularly threatened; for example, with the death of the last native speaker in 2021, the Bering dialect of the Aleut language disappeared. But the problem of disappearance also faces languages with a large number of native speakers: in 2017, Russia abolished the mandatory study of native languages in schools, so the scope of use of native languages is narrowing, and they themselves are becoming less prestigious.

The federal law “On Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples of the RF” (1999) enshrines the right of representatives of indigenous peoples to observe their traditions and perform religious ceremonies that do not contravene Russian legislation. However, the law does not provide specific mechanisms for protecting indigenous cultural and religious objects, so the interests of scholars, federal and local authorities, business, religious figures, and indigenous leaders sometimes come into conflict. It results not only in destruction of sacred nature objects (like the case when a coal company in Kemerovo Oblast blew up Karagay-Lyash, the sacred mountain of the small indigenous Shor people). It relates also to the variously understood “return to origins” that leads to conflicts between indigenous practices and the Orthodox religion, which has been thrust on the population of Russia in recent years. Crosses have been erected on places sacred to indigenous peoples in different regions, despite their protests (for instance, a metal Orthodox cross weighing 7.5 tons was installed on the sacred mountain of Mustag in Sheregesh, Tashtagolsky District, Kemerovo Oblast without the consent of the Shor people).

Mining in South Siberia mining results in the destruction of natural objects and burial grounds and religious and cultural sites that today's population of these territories believes to be a part of its cultural heritage. Thus, sacred objects of Khakas people (Republic of Khakasia) have been destroyed by mining companies (over 150 cultural heritage objects and hundreds of natural monuments and objects of worship are located in the business zones of the large coal mining companies operating on Koybalskaya Steppe; many of them are currently facing the threat of destruction). This relates not just to ancient sites of worship, which are now archeological sites, but also to the destruction of or restricted access to active cemeteries (for instance, Shor people whose relatives are buried at a cemetery located in the ravaged village of Kazas have no access to it).

## Structural discrimination against Roma in Russian Federation

The situation of Roma communities in Russia is diverse but remains difficult: the problems rooted in the ethnic policies of the USSR have not yet been overcome. Lack of consistent state measures makes it impossible for Roma people to break the vicious circle of structural discrimination. Most of the Roma population in the RF lives in dense settlements, which sprung up across the country in 1956, when a special law banning the nomadic way of life was adopted. In the years since, existing dense Roma settlements have burgeoned, and new ones have appeared. However, the absolute majority of dwellings do not meet basic household standards, and the houses and land on which these houses are located are not properly registered under current law. Residents of dense settlements have found themselves in a situation of structural discrimination, when one problem leads to another: it is not possible to bring water, electricity, and gas lines into an unregistered house, it is difficult for residents of such a house to apply for registration at place of residence and personal documents, it is not possible to receive mail, there is no access to social payments and medical assistance without a registration at place of residence, and children have trouble enrolling at school, which, in turn, leads to low levels of education, unemployment, and even greater poverty. Rather than finding a comprehensive solution to this historical problem, the Russian government has taken repressive measures against residents of dense Roma settlements, who are not able to lay water, gas, and electricity lines into their unregistered houses or pay for utilities. Providers shut off gas, water, and electricity supplies into the settlements, frequently during the cold times of the year, which results in fires, since residents start heating their homes with fire-prone stoves.

**Segregation of Roma children in schools.** Roma children face segregation and poor-quality education in schools in many regions throughout Russia. This violates their constitutional rights to non-discrimination and education and damages their ability to integrate, which is often the cause of the low standard of living and marginalization of the entire Roma ethnicity. Segregation in Russian schools takes on many forms: for example, many Roma children are placed in special remedial classes for children with limited intellectual and other capacities. This is done on the basis of tests that are mainly taken by Roma people. However, all the children are given the same diagnoses, which are “general social deprivation and bilingualism”. Roma children are also placed in separate so-called “Roma classes” that only include Roma children. They are also frequently subjected to segregation outside classrooms. For example, they are not allowed to use common play yards or cafeterias, and they are not allowed to participate in school holidays. Also, there have been cases where children were transferred to distance learning. Finally, statements made by teachers in the segregated education system make it patently clear that these teachers expect less success from Roma students or don’t believe that they can learn at all. Therefore, they have low requirements for these children.

The situation has not changed in recent years – efforts to overcome segregation and introduce an integrative approach have only been seen in isolated schools, while the majority of schools attended by large numbers of Roma children continue to instruct these children separately from others. When homes are demolished, and families evicted, children are deprived of their access to education – child services and education agencies have no interest in where evicted children will attend school, and the right of children to education is never considered by courts issuing a decision on demolition or eviction.

**Example:** One of the most egregious and at the same time typical cases of ongoing violation of the Roma children's rights to education is the situation in Mekhzavod village, Samara Region. In 2018, all 78 pupils living in a Roma settlement were expelled from school No.33 where they used to study in separate Roma classes. The reason for the expulsion, according to the principal, was difficulties in teaching these children, as well as protests of non-Roma parents. In response to the demands of Roma parents to return their children to school, they were advised to apply to the school No.156, which is closer to the Roma settlement; but they were rejected due to lack of vacancies and another territorial affiliation. In winter 2019-2020, responding to a lawyer’s application in the interests of the Roma children, the Samara Department of Education refused to solve the problem, and after collecting Roma parents’ requests and submitting them to the school administration, the children were not reinstated. As of March, 2021, the absolute majority of Roma children from the Mekhzavod village is out of school education.

The officials responsible for protecting children from education discrimination deny

segregation of Roma children or do not find anything illegal in it and sometimes openly declare this position responding international bodies. Russian authorities state that a parental decision may be a ground for segregation is totally unsupported, since no one, including parents, can violate the rights of a child. References to a “nomadic way of life” and “national traditions” as grounds for segregated instruction is striking for its inaccuracy, since Roma in Russia have not led a nomadic way of life in over 70 years, have adopted a settled lifestyle, and have never “traditionally” received an education. As both global experience and the experience of some schools in Russia that have tried to reject segregation show, segregation is not “the speediest way to overcome the gap in mastering academic programs and the subsequent transfer to regular classes,” which is what the state report to the UN CERD (2017) says, but actually means that children will only attain a low level of education and are not at all prepared to move to regular classes, at least after elementary school, resulting in their withdrawal from school altogether after spending several senseless years there.

### **The situation of Mugat in the ex-USSR Central Asian countries**

Mugat community (also known as Jughī, or Lyuli, or Central Asian Gypsies/Roma, with the autonym Mugat or Mughat) formerly led a nomadic life and even now often migrate in search of work, both within and beyond the borders of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, including pendulous migration to the Russian Federation. According to the official data, there are appr. 12,000 Jughī/Mugat in Tajikistan; more than 50 000 Lyuli/Mugat in Uzbekistan; up to 6 000 Lyuli/Mugat in Kyrgyzstan.

The Mugat community face structural discrimination, meaning vicious circle of lack of education, segregation at school and difficult access to secondary school level, extreme poverty, unemployment, unregistered housing and the associated risk of expulsion or demolition, problems of birth registration and personal documents, conflict with law and related ethnic profiling and police violence, negative stereotypes widespread in the society. Women and children are particularly vulnerable and, in addition to discrimination from the outside, face the pernicious effects of harmful traditional practices (early arranged marriages, polygamy, the exploitation of children, and the occupation of begging). The Mugat remain a despised and marginalized group, while the governments mostly deny the existence of discrimination against this community and the need to adopt a complex of government programs to improve its situation (in particular, the position of Tajikistan in its report to the UN CERD reviewed in 2017, (CERD/C/TJK/9-11, paragraph 33)). In December 2018, concluding the review cycle, the UN CERD [regretted](#) the unwillingness of the Tajikistan authorities to adopt an action plan to improve the situation of Mughat (Jughī) and encouraged the authorities to change their position, pointing out the urgent need to overcome discrimination of this ethnic minority, to ensure access to education for all children, especially girls, as well as to provide for equal rights for housing, access to public services and medical care.

Some positive changes can be seen in the position of the government of Kyrgyzstan; in the Interagency Roadmap for 2019–2022 to implement CERD’s recommendations (2017). The Roadmap includes preparatory work towards the adoption of a comprehensive antidiscrimination law (on the basis of ethnic origin, gender, age, sexual orientation, and gender identity) and to adopt measures to protect groups vulnerable to discrimination, including measures to overcome stigmatization and negative stereotypes of Uzbeks, Uighurs, Turks, and Mughats and to end the use of hate speech in the media and by officials.

### **The ethnic minorities of Tajikistan: lack of recognition and support**

Tajikistan's declared policy of creating a "unified nation" (with emphasis on the tragic consequences of disunity as a cause of civil war) has led to neglect of the cultural and social needs of ethnic minorities, giving rise to overt or subtle discrimination that can take different forms in the case of each of these ethnic groups.

**Situation of Pamiri peoples.** Pamiri are made up of a number of peoples (Shughni, Rushans, Wakhi, Ishkoshimi, Yazgulami, and several others) populating a vast mountainous area in eastern Tajikistan who speak their own languages and are visually and culturally distinct from the ethnic majority. They primarily practice Ismailism, a branch of Shia Islam, unlike the majority of Tajiks, who

are Sunni Muslim. The population of Pamir took part in conflicts during the civil war of 1992–1997; in 2012, in Khorugh (the capital of Gorno-Badakhshan Region) and surrounding areas, there were clashes between the Tajik Army and the local population, followed by repressive actions against Pamiri. Because of the Pamiri traits described above, prejudice against them has ethnic, cultural-linguistic, religious, and political dimensions: they are visually and linguistically distinct and are looked on as the "wrong kind of Muslims" and suspected of separatist leanings. Many Pamiri feel like outsiders in the country, and they are generally more liable to migrate than people in other regions. Despite the fact that Pamiri from inside and outside are perceived as a distinctive community, Pamiri are not recognized as a minority by officials. In the census of 2010, they were included into the general category "Tajiks"; they are not mentioned in the actual Tajikistan's report to the UN CERD (CERD/C/TJK/12-13, February 2020). Their languages, even having a writing system and teaching tools, are excluded from the educational system (children are taught in Tajik, or in English in some private schools) and the official sphere (state institutions, courts, documents). The lack of Pamiri-language books and periodicals and of television and radio broadcasts is also viewed by Pamiri as part of a government policy to reduce the use of these languages.

**Situation of Yaghnobi minority.** Yaghnobi small minority also does not receive the government support while the Yaghnobi language and culture are under threat of extinction. Yaghnobi have historically lived in isolated settlements in the mountains around the Yaghnob River Valley. In the 1970s they were forcibly resettled to other parts of Tajikistan, where an absolute majority of Yaghnobi still live (the number of Yaghnobi ranges from 5,000 to 15,000, depending on the source) while a small population is remaining in the Yaghnob Valley (less than 1,000 people) in the difficult conditions posed by their high-elevation home. For the Yaghnobi, their forced mass resettlement in the 1970s from where they traditionally lived is a tragic page in their people's history. No teaching is being done in the Yaghnobi language, and there are no lessons in Yaghnobi in schools outside the Yaghnob Valley (such as in Zafarobod District), although this language has its own writings and teaching tools, and there is a demand for Yaghnob-language education. In the Yaghnob Valley children have problems accessing a complete secondary education (as a rule, children only complete elementary school).

### **Discrimination against the Dungan minority in Kazakhstan**

**Anti-Dungan pogrom in the South of Kazakhstan, 2020.** On February 7, 2020, the most extensive ethnic conflict seen in Kazakhstan in recent years occurred when hundreds of pogromists attacked the Dungan villages of Masanchi, Sortobe, Bular Batyr, and Aukhatty. Eleven people died (10 Dungans and one Kazakh, according to official data), over 180 Dungans received injuries and gunshot wounds (no information is available about Kazakh victims), and dozens of private homes, retail businesses, and automobiles were set on fire. Fearing for their lives after the pogrom, approximately 8,000 Dungans living in Korday District fled to neighboring Kyrgyzstan. However, the reaction of the government and the law enforcement form the public opinion that the Dungans had been «the instigators of the conflict». Even though the conflict in Korday was clearly ethnic in nature and planned in advance, Kazakh officials have not acknowledged the ethnic and racial motives of the attackers.

In August 2020, as part of the urgent response procedure, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination considered the situation of the anti-Dungan pogroms and stated that Kazakhstan, as a signatory state of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, was obliged to ensure an effective and independent investigation of the events of February 7-8, 2020, as well as effective protection of the Dungan minority, reparation and support for victims, access of independent observers to the Korday region. There was no official response from the Kazakhstan authorities to this statement so far.

**The current situation of Dungans.** The Dungan population in Kazakhstan numbers almost 60,000. In the 1880s, their ancestors moved from north-western China to the territory of the Russian Empire (currently the territory of Jambyl Oblast, Kazakhstan and the neighboring northern districts of Kyrgyzstan). Most Dungan live densely in monoethnic villages of Korday District, Jambyl Oblast, where they make up 26 percent of the district's population. They speak the Dungan language (Sino-Tibetan language group), are Sunni Muslims, and maintain close ties with Dungan people in



Kyrgyzstan, who live nearby along the other side of the border, near the villages of Masanchi, Sortobe, Bular Batyr, and Aukhatty.

The Dungan people are attributed with the following qualities: industriousness, skills to work in agriculture; prosperity, success in trade and business due to their knowledge of Chinese and connections with China; piety and the accompanying “high morality” understood as a commitment to traditional values (family, many children, strong marriages and family ties, subordination of women to men); and ethnic solidarity. These qualities can also be viewed as negative and mean that Dungan people are treated as aliens and outsiders: Dungans are accused of overusing fertilizer and “ruining” the earth; envied for their success in business and accused of corruption and distribution of cheap, low-quality goods; criticized for their isolation, poor command of the Kazakh language (at least among the Dungans of the older generation), and avoidance of military service, and accused of keeping their children out of school (children start working in the fields at a young age, young girls are given away in marriage) and being largely uneducated. However, Dungan children receive education in Kazakh or in Russian in local schools; the Dungan language is not included into curriculum. The association between the Dungan and the Chinese has been an additional factor in isolation of Dungans (the pogrom in Korday District occurred right at the start of the coronavirus epidemic and heightened Sinophobia worldwide).

Given the absence of a proper integration policy, the linguistic, cultural, religious, and other differences between local Kazakhs and Dungans became factors in the estrangement of these two ethnicities, which, used maliciously, easily can develop into a new confrontation.

Nowadays the Dungans continue to face serious human rights violations after pogroms. Some of the Dungans are under trial (arrested or released on their own recognizance) despite they had to defend their families and property from pogromists. Residents of Dungan villages reported intimidation and psychological pressure, searches and detentions at night with the participation of servicemen of special military units in these actions. Many of the Dungans who had faced the courts on various charges, claimed that they had been tortured during the investigation. In particular, at a hearing on January 18, 2021, one of them shouted: “We were beaten, tortured with electric shock!” After the trial another Dungan prosecuted person inflicted bodily harm on himself, explaining his act by the fact that the convoy had beaten one of the accused in front of him.

Despite some positive efforts of the authorities in 2020-2021 (reconstruction of the roads, provision of the villages with gas, restoring a number of houses and buildings destroyed during the pogroms), the social climate in the district leaves much to be desired. Many Dungans are afraid of possible obstacles for their traditional agricultural work (i.e. possible risk of refusal in renting land and water supply which is a big risk for investments in this business); they are looking for other places and seriously think about emigration.

### **The situation of Uzbeks in Kyrgyzstan**

Ethnic minorities are distributed unevenly across the territory of Kyrgyzstan depending on region, which determines the specific nature of relations among various ethnic groups. Uzbeks, which make up the largest minority, account for 14.6 percent of the population and are concentrated in the south, where they make up 28 percent of the population. The north of the country (Chuy Oblast) is ethnically diverse and is home to relatively small ethnic communities (the largest are Russians, Dungans, Ahiska (Meskhetian) Turks, Uighurs, Cossacks, and others, while the smallest groups are Caucasian peoples, including Dargins, Lezgians, Avars, and others), Roma, Chinese, and others). The ethnic clashes of 2010 mostly affected South Kyrgyzstan, but the tragic events of Osh also had an impact on the country’s northern regions.

A number of problems of vital importance are shared by members of various ethnic minorities in Kyrgyzstan. These include xenophobia on the part of the majority, unequal treatment by the police, difficulties finding work, loss of native language and absence of conditions for its study and use, low level of education, and violation of the rights of women and girls due to the patriarchal society. Ethnic stereotypes also impact the situation of minorities.

In spite of the time that has passed since the brutal ethnic conflict that took place in South Kyrgyzstan in 2010, the situation of Uzbeks remains complicated. They face biased treatment from both individual citizens and government representatives and lack proper access to justice. Instances of



violence and torture during the events and their investigation have still not been examined objectively. In addition, high profile cases have not been given fair trials. Few Uzbeks work in the legislative and executive branches or in law enforcement. They also encounter difficulties opening and running businesses. The lack of demand for Uzbeks in social life leads vulnerable Uzbek youth to religious radicalization. Most cases of criminal prosecution for extremism concern possession of banned literature; there is a great deal of evidence that these kinds of cases are fabricated. The sharp reduction in instruction in the Uzbek language that occurred after 2010 and the mass shift to teaching in Kyrgyz was especially dramatic for the Uzbek population in South Kyrgyzstan. Now teachers working in Uzbek schools teach in Russian or Kyrgyz, which they do not speak as well as Uzbek, and there are no state programs to provide additional training for them. Because of this, the quality of education in former Uzbek language schools has plummeted. Now Uzbeks in this situation prefer to send their children to schools with Russian language instruction, so the classes there are overcrowded with up to 40 or 50 children. The secondary school graduation exam has not been offered in Uzbek since 2015: Graduates of Uzbek schools must take this exam in Kyrgyz or Russian, since no institutes or universities provide instruction in Uzbek. The government has stated that the mass shift to instruction in Kyrgyz was needed to overcome the isolation of the Uzbek community and ensure its integration into public life. However, drastic changes in education policy are not helping to consolidate society. On the contrary, the Uzbek community has become even more isolated.