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Special Projects of SOTA Turkistan.Org

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1. DOSTLAR

DOSTLAR FORUM seeks to establish solid foundations for friendship between the British and the Azeri peoples; through promotion of understanding and advancement of issues pertaining to political and commercial activity. The primary aim is to eliminate mis-understanding and mis-information resulting from acts of propaganda orchestrated by unfriendly groups, counter such activities and strive for beneficial exchanges; by any lawful means.

Besides above, FORUM envisages involvement in organising self help groups to assist travellers, businesspersons, students and alike to facilitate easy passage, for their intended itinerary in our respective countries.

Furthermore, FORUM intends to promote, by any means, friendship ties with individuals, groups, associations, societies and such like, who may have their origins or operations outside the recognised borders of United Kingdom and Azerbaijan.

DOSTLAR FORUM is directly affiliated to the Turkistan organisation and promoted by the founder members. Coordinator Dostlar *Haluk Savas*

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2. ICC -- International Committee for C.R.I.M.E.A. Crimean-Tatar Repatriation Initiative & Movement for Equality Alliance

ICC is a newly founded Task Force, an inititiative of S.O.T.A.

ICC was founded by Mehmet Tutuncu and myself, with the great help and support of TL members and Urszula Doroszhewska, a journalist and human rights activist from Poland who is the program director at IDEE (Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe).

We stand for the repatriation of Crimean Tatars who were unfairly exiled from their homelands in 1944.

As Alan Fisher states in his opening paragraph of his book, 'The Crimean Tatars'; The C.Tatars today are the only nation who are still in diaspora. They have never chose the violent ways to fight against this injustice, and they were exploited and mistreated by many nationalities and ethnic groups based on Stalin's lie that they were the Nazi collaborators during the WWII.

Although, they were rehabilitated in 1967, no one in the FSU or in the world heard about that decree

that was approved by Kremlin in 1967.

As the founders of IC CRIMEA, our first goal is to help the Crimean Tatars to go back to their rightfully deserved homeland in Crimea, and help them to gain the citizenship rights from the Ukranian government so that they can work, register, build homes, go to schools, and participate in political and civic life in their homeland. Considering the new language laws in Ukraine which prohibits minorities to speak in their native languages at the work places, and many other social problems such as work permits, building permits etc. We have a lot of mountains to cross ahead of us.

The Russian minority is vehemently opposing to the idea of the Crimean Tatars' return to their homeland. Issue of the Black Sea fleet is a very difficult one to solve, and in the mean time Ukraine supports Crimean Tatars as an issue of deportees, and wants the Uzbek government recognize the entire Crimean Tatars population as deportees.

Plans:

First of all we are planning to get in touch with the mejlis, and establish a contact with them. Mejlis has relations with Ukraine, and we believe they can enlighten us about the Crimean Tatar desires as well as about the Ukranian feelings.

After that we are planning to write petitions, and send them to various organizations, and government officials in support of the recognition of mejlis, and Crimean Tatar repatriation, and Ukranian citizenship for the returning Tatars to the Crimean peninsula.

In the mean time we will be working closely with IDEE in Poland, and with their help we will establish contacts with dozens of NGOs that are springing up in Crimea.

One of the most important ones is the Rebirth of Crimea Foundation led by Lutfi Osman. Upon establishing contact with him and his organization, we will keep our ears open and listen what they have to say, and we will act and prepare our next move according to the most needed action that was related to us by them, the real Crimean citizens who live in Crimea.

We also would like to get in touch with some business offices and/or foundations and try to see if they would like to donate their used computers to this worthy cause. Because computers are the key for our communication with the natives of Crimea.

Then, possibly with the help of Red Cross or Caritas [(Urszula can help us with this, this is a very reliable Catholic charity that my organization (Eastern and Central Europe Program, at the new School for Social Research) used to work with in early 90's, after the revolution towards democracy in Eastern Europe], we can send these computers to different NGO's in Crimea.

According to IDEE reports, Mr. Lutfi Osman already went through some computer training program at IDEE, and IDEE currently is supponsoring more people now who will go through computer training in Poland.

Furthermore, if we can make the right contacts and get enough financial support, we can send some of our officers to several seminars, conferences, exhibitions, and such. If we get support from our colleagues who are in academia, we can present papers and such in conferences such as AAASS, ASN, AATSEEL etc. to raise consciousness about the social and political issues in Crimea.

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