



Circassian Repatriation Organization
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To:
His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Putin
The President of Russian Federation
Moscow, Russian Federation

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Dear Mr. President,

The Circassian Repatriation Organization (CRO) is a Not-for-profit, humanitarian, charitable and peaceful Organization. The CRO is an independent organization not affiliated with any governments or countries. The CRO's foremost objective is to provide aid and assistance to the Circassian people especially throughout difficulties, and to elevate their hardships. We strongly believe that the best aid we can provide for Circassians is to help them return to their homeland in the Circassian republics of the Russian Federation (Adygea Republic, Kabardino-Balkaria Republic and the Karachay-Cherkessia republic).

Mr. President, as you are aware, since the Circassians were forced out of the Caucasus during the Russian Empire, RSFSR, and USSR periods, they have been facing one tragedy after another. The current unrest and political uncertainty in Syria are a living example of the hardship that the Circassians have been going through for many years. The CRO is deeply concerned and greatly disturbed by the tragic and horrifying circumstances that the Circassian community is currently facing in Syria. During this unrest, hundreds of Circassians returned to the motherland where they were greeted and assisted by Circassians living in the North Caucasus, however, the Citizenship laws are putting too much burden on the families that returned to Russia. We are urgently appealing to you, Mr. President, to facilitate the awarding of the Russian citizenship to Circassian returnees without going through the usual lengthy citizenship procedures.

Furthermore, we urge you to act according to the State Policy of the Russian Federation towards Compatriots Abroad and help the Circassian community in Syria foremost who are still living in danger inside the warzones and those who have fled to surrounding countries to return to their historical motherland. We would like to point out that the Russian Federation fulfilled its duty in the past and

helped the compatriots living abroad to escape war zones and return to their homeland. For example, escaping the conflict in the former Yugoslavia and escaping the current conflict in Ukraine.

The CRO appeals to you and calls upon the Russian Government to recognize *the Right of Return* of all Circassians who live outside North Caucasus (the original homeland of their ancestors) and grow roots in their historical homeland. According to the Federal law № 99-FZ " [Dated 24.05.1999], Circassians are considered Russian Federation compatriots who are permanently residing abroad. Based on the State Policy of the Russian Federation towards compatriots abroad, Circassians have the right to return and chose the Russian Federation as a home regardless whether they currently have citizenship or not.

The returning Circassians will bring back with them the diversity and economical breadth that will further strengthen the Russian Federation's economy. Their integration into the societies of the North Caucasus will also enrich the cultural fabric of the entire country. We sincerely believe that any steps to be taken by the Russian Government in facilitating the immediate return of all Circassian compatriots will be in the benefit of the Russian Federation as well as the Circassian people. Therefore, it is time for the Russian Government to fulfill its honorable duty and recognize the right of all Circassians to return to their homeland in the North Caucasus. The CRO believes that this historical breakthrough can be done under your leadership and the directives of the Russian Federal government, and through collaboration with local governments of the North Caucasus republics.

The CRO is looking forward for the day when the Circassians are treated equally with all the Russian Federation's compatriots and their return to their homeland becomes a priority. We are extending an invitation for your government to consider the CRO a partner in this endeavor and are willing to discuss this immense aspiration of the Circassians with your government to help make this aspiration a reality.

While we await your kind actions and reply, please accept our deepest regards and best of wishes for a new year filled with peace and prosperity.

Yours truly,

Orfan S-Stash

Orfan Shouakar-Stash, PhD

Chairman of the CRO