

Uzbekistan

Response to Information Request Number:	UZB98001.zny
Date:	11 June 1998
Subject:	Uzbekistan: Information On The Treatment Of Crimean Tatars
From:	INS Resource Information Center, Washington, DC
Keywords:	Uzbekistan / Crimean Tatars / Fergana Valley / Ethnic Discrimination

Query:

What is the status of Crimean Tatars living in Uzbekistan? Are Crimean Tatars subject to mistreatment?

Response:

Brian Williams, Doctoral Candidate and Lecturer at University of Wisconsin - Madison indicates that Crimean Tatars in Uzbekistan are marginalized socially and economically. Advancement in academics and employment of Crimean Tatars is limited by the Uzbek majority. Anti-Tatar discrimination (e.g., graffiti) is pervasive. Access to authority, whether on the local – Mahala, or state level, by Crimean Tatars is limited. In addition, the Uzbek government has not supported the development of institutions of Crimean culture (Williams 29 May 1998).

Government crackdowns on independent Muslim groups (i.e., those who do not adhere to the state-sponsored Islam) began in 1994 and have continued with varying degrees of severity through the present. Helsinki Watch reports that these crackdowns, which include arbitrary arrests and detentions, disappearances, impeding attendance at certain mosques, arbitrary dismissals from work, and the prevention of some individuals from teaching Islam, intensified again in December of 1997 (HRW May 1998, 3, 12; HRW May 1996, 7-9). Practicing a variation of Islam closely connected to their ethnic roots, Crimean Tatars are frequently the focus of these crackdowns (Williams 29 May 1998).

Although the pogroms in the Fergana (Farghona) Valley of Uzbekistan in 1989 focused on the expulsion of Mekhetian Turks, Crimean Tatars in that area were also subject to abuse. In his field research in that area, Brian Williams found that over 100 homes of Crimean Tatars were burned (Williams 29 May 1998).

Leaving Uzbekistan is also made difficult for Crimean Tatars. The government of Uzbekistan has offered no assistance to those Crimean Tatars who wish to emigrate to Ukraine. In order to renounce their Uzbek citizenship (a prerequisite for receiving Ukrainian citizenship), a fee of approximately 100 dollars must be paid per person. Those who never received an Uzbek passport must first apply and pay for a passport, and then pay for the renunciation (Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe 27 May 1998). The economic difficulties of emigration are intensified by the deflated prices at which houses of Crimean Tatars must be sold and their lack of savings (Open Society Institute Sept. 1996).

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RIC within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

References:

Human Rights Watch (HRW)/Helsinki. May 1998. *Republic of Uzbekistan: Crackdown in the Farghona Valley: Arbitrary Arrests and Religious Discrimination*. New York: Human Rights Watch/Helsinki.

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Lafota, Irena. Director, Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe. 27 May 1998. Telephone Interview.

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Williams, Brian. Doctoral Candidate and Lecturer, University of Wisconsin - Madison. 29 May 1998. Telephone Interview.

Attachments:

Human Rights Watch (HRW)/Helsinki. May 1998. *Republic of Uzbekistan: Crackdown in the Farghona Valley: Arbitrary Arrests and Religious Discrimination*. New York: Human Rights Watch/Helsinki.

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