

THE CHERKESK ISSUE IN THE SOUTH RUSSIA: INNER CHALLENGES AND GEOPOLITICAL RISKS

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Scholars are considering the problem of aggravation "Circassian issue" in the south of Russia, which took place in 2007, after the city of Sochi was the capital of Winter Olympic games in 2014. Traditionally, the "Circassian issue" refers to the process of entering the Circassian ethnic group in the Russian Empire, which began at the end of the XVIII century and formally ended in May 1864 after the end of the Caucasian War.

It is noted that to date the history of the Circassian people is often the subject of speculation by certain political forces, standing on the position of ethnic nationalism and pursuing their own specific goals. Almost immediately after Winter Olympic Games in 2014, a number of Circassian public organizations have criticized the holding of sports events in the region. In particular, against the games there were organized social movements such as the "Circassian congress", "Circassian International Association" and "Worldwide Circassian Brotherhood". Numerous Circassian diasporas didn't stay aside, they created the committee so called "No Sochi 2014", which brought together about 30 Circassian movements and organizations around the world. It is emphasized that nowadays, there are three basic requirements that are put forward to the Russian authorities the Circassian national movement: 1) recognition of the Russian events of the period of the Caucasian war a genocide of Circassians; 2) assistance to the repatriation of Circassians to their historic homeland; 3) creation of a single Circassian subject of the Russian Federation.

In a future prospect, the Russian authorities are not likely to bring into life all these requirements. One of the reasons is that the policy of the Russian Empire in relation to the Circassian ethnic group does not fall under the definition of genocide, stated in the UN Convention "On Prevention of the Crime of Genocide and Punishment." According to the author, we should differentiate two notions "genocide" and "war": unlike war, genocide is an intentional crime, its purpose to exterminate a race or an ethnic group. The second reason why the authority can't implement the demands of Circassian public organizations of the requirements is that the decision on the relocation to the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the XIX century was taken by Circassians, mostly of their own free will, which was obtained due to the propaganda carried out by Muslim clergy, with the support of the Turkish government and diplomatic structures of the UK. As for the third requirement, the inability to implement it is stipulated for the fact that it carries a serious threat to the territorial unity of the Russian state. The project of creation the «Great Cherkess Republic» has existed since the beginning of the 90s, and the first requirement from Circassian national movement to leave Russia were made in the autumn of 1992. Availability of this project proves the desire of certain forces to undermine the national security of the Russian Federation, and also to make contribution to the weakening of the country's geopolitical position in the region.

Key words: Circassian question, the national movement, genocide, ethnic group, state, territorial integrity and nationalism.

The aggravation of the Circassian issue in the South of Russia took place in 2007, when Sochi was declared the capital of Winter Olympic Games in 2014. Circassian's discontent was linked primarily to the fact that the construction of sports facilities was held on historically significant for the ethnic territories – Sochi and Krasnaya Polyana, where Circassians lived for centuries. Because of Sochi after the end of the Caucasian War in May 1864 there was a mass migration of the Circassians in the Ottoman Empire.

It should be noted that not all of the Circassian population in Russia at that time condemned the fact of holding the Olympics in Sochi. It was actively raised the issue of Circassian public organizations. In particular, in Russia against the Olympic Games in Sochi advocated social movement "Circassian congress". A less radical position was taken when the movement "Adyghe Khasa" which argued for "assistance in repelling the heritage of the indigenous population of the Black Sea – Cherkess (Circassians) in the cultural program of the Winter Sochi 2014 Olympic Games" [5], as well as the assignment of the Circassians-Shapsugs living in venues of the Olympic

games, the status of indigenous people in the charter of the Krasnodar Territory. Abroad, the most actively against the Olympic Games in Sochi was a specially created committee "No Sochi 2014", uniting 30 Circassian movements and organizations in different countries around the world [8, p. 81]. We have to admit that, unfortunately, to date, the history of the Circassian people is often the subject of speculation by certain political forces, standing on the position of ethnic nationalism and pursuing their own specific goals.

Currently, the demands made by the Circassian national movement to the Russian authorities, are reduced to the necessity of recognition of the Russian events of the period of the Caucasian war a genocide Circassians (Cherkess) [13], the need to promote the Russian authorities the repatriation of Circassians (Cherkess) to their historical homeland, as well as the creation of a single Circassian the subject of the Russian Federation [7, p. 140-141].

Genocide recognition requirement Circassians during the Caucasian war of today is one of the main demands of the Circassian organizations, both moderate and fairly radical wing (this position is held "International Circassian Association" movement "Adyghe Khasa", "Worldwide Circassian Brotherhood", and "Circassian congress"). It should be noted that in the short term, expect the implementation of this requirement is unlikely to, since there is quite a good reason. One of them is the fact that the policy of the Russian Empire in relation to the Circassian ethnic group does not fall under the definition of genocide, stated in the UN Convention "On Prevention of the Crime of Genocide and Punishment." According to the second article of the Convention, "genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: Killing members of the group; Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about the total or partial physical destruction; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group ". [3] It is important in this aspect is that for the definition of "genocide" is crucial factor of premeditation. Genocide is always a crime with intent, the only purpose of which is the destruction of a nation or ethnic group. Unlike genocide, war is not aimed at the absolute physical destruction of certain people, despite the fact that the policy of genocide, as a rule, is held in the course of hostilities. But if the fighting does not bear the destruction of an ethnic group, and to the goal, for example, capture a certain area, then they can not recognize the genocide. In this case, it would be correct to speak of a military operation, and the loss of population in the course of it will be correctly seen as war victims.

It should be borne in mind that the loss of numerous Circassian people in the XIX century, associated with the long, bloody, and took place under the laws of the time of the Caucasian war, which lasted for 47 years. In addition, in any case can not forget about the losses incurred during the Caucasian war of Russian ethnicity. In particular, the number of dead among the lower ranks of the army amounted to 24 143 people, including officers – 804 people; the number of injuries among the lower ranks of 61 971 people, including officers – 3 154; with regard to prisoners of war, among the officers of the number of prisoners amounted to 92 people, among the lower ranks – 5 915 people [2, p. 2], a significant number of whom subsequently died. In addition, important is the fact that a significant cause of the beginning of the Caucasian War, served quite aggressive policy pursued by the mountain peoples in relation to the Russian population, which manifests itself in a variety of regular raids on villages. According to various estimates, for all time as a result of these raids the number of dead and wounded was 2,000 [2, p. 2].

It should also be stressed that after the end of the Caucasian War, the Russian authorities have pursued a policy aimed at preserving the usual for the mountaineers forms of social organization, in particular the June 4, 1865 was issued the "Regulations on the management of the mountaineers of the Kuban region." In addition, the mountaineers-Muslims were given the right to organize management "on adat and Sharia and special rules, drawn up gradually, based on the experience and needs of developing in them" [1, c. 435]. It should be noted that in the period from 1893 to 1915.

the number of Circassians living in the territory of the Kuban region increased by 44.2%, from 94 040 to 135 606 people [4].

Quite differently evolved fate of the Circassians who settled after the end of the Caucasian War in the Ottoman Empire. For example, of the 220,000 Circassians who settled in Anatolia province of the Ottoman Empire, for one year, from November 1863 to September 1864 about 100,000 died from disease and starvation, and were sold into slavery. It resulted in a high mortality rate of the Circassians also repeated relocation from one residence to another, often Circassians were placed on the land, absolutely not adapted to full agriculture [6, c. 44]. In addition to the huge reduction in population, the Circassians in the Ottoman Empire were subjected to considerable assimilation of what happened to them in the Russian Empire. One of the results of the Turkish policy of assimilation was the disappearance of the Circassian subethnic group – Ubykh, resettled in the Ottoman Empire after the end of the Caucasian War. Given these statistics, it is quite surprising that the various Circassian political organizations and movements do not express the requirements of the recognition of the Circassian genocide by Turkey, while regularly pushing such demands towards Russia.

A similar approach on this issue is shared by Georgia. May 20, 2011 the Georgian parliament adopted a resolution "On recognition of the Circassian genocide, carried out by the Russian Empire". [11] Thus, Georgia became the first country in the world to officially recognize the genocide of Circassians. In our opinion, the Georgian parliament's decision is politically engaged, since the issue of the enormous losses of the Circassian population in the Ottoman Empire, the Georgian parliament was not even discussed. Background to the decision to recognize the genocide of Circassians emerged back in 2010, during the conference "Hidden Nations, Enduring Crimes: The Circassians and the peoples of the North Caucasus Between Past and Future" held in Tbilisi on March 20-21. The main outcome of the conference was the Circassian organizations appeal to the Georgian authorities with a request for recognition of the "Circassian genocide committed by the Russian Empire in the XIX century". In November of the same year it was held another conference with the same name, whose main objective was to prepare a scientific study of the interpretation of historical events [12, c. 132]. It is possible that a decision on the resolution was adopted after the discussions of the issue of the Georgian political elite experts US Jamestown Foundation, consult this period the country's leadership [15].

In our opinion, one of the main objectives of Georgia's recognition of the Circassian genocide – to get in their face a new ally in the region and at the same time contribute to the destabilization of the Abkhazian-Circassian relations, which have recently been experiencing not the best of times. At one time, the Circassians supported Abkhazia during the war with Georgia (it is noteworthy that during the war the chief of staff and then defense minister of Abkhazia was Sultan Sosnaliev, Kabardian's nationality), regarding Abkhazia as a state ready in the future to defend their national interests. These hopes were caused, first of all, the cultural proximity of the Abkhaz and Circassian peoples, whose languages constitute one and the same branch of the Abkhaz-Adyghe family. However, hopes of Circassians did not come true. After independence in 2008, Abkhazia went to the construction of a sovereign state, in which the priority right to acquire a nationality, in addition to representatives of the "titular nationality", also granted Abaza [5]. Do not hurry to recognize Abkhazia and the Circassian genocide, than miss the opportunity to take advantage of its geopolitical interests in Georgia. The sharp deterioration in Abkhaz-Circassian relations occurred in 2011, aided by the support of the Abkhaz organizations of the Olympic Games in Sochi, which caused a negative reaction among the Circassian population. In turn, the Abkhaz very carefully follow the development of the Georgian-Circassian relations, fearing the emergence of new political projects aimed at weakening the emerging Abkhaz statehood.

After the adoption of the resolution "On recognition of the Circassian genocide, carried out by the Russian Empire," the Georgian authorities went directly to work on the implementation of its provisions. October 12, 2011 the Georgian president signed a decree on the opening of the Center of

Circassian culture, which was launched a week later. The main purpose of the opening of the Centre – to show that, in contrast to the existing in other states Circassian centers having the status of a public organization established in the center of Georgia Circassian culture will be provided state support and the nature of its activities should change somewhat. Headed Center Professor of Tbilisi State University Merab Chukhua, who was a member of the Georgian Parliamentary Committee Commission for the preparation of conclusions on the recognition of the Circassian genocide [12, p. 132]. Key areas of activity of the Center is to promote the Circassian culture, improve Georgia's image in the eyes of the Circassians living in the Russian Federation, as well as in the creation of a historical myth of the centuries-long friendship of the Circassian and Georgian peoples. [9] In addition, the staff of the Circassian Cultural Center took part in the development strategy of the State of Georgia in relations with the peoples of the North Caucasus. In this document, on page eighteen designated priorities through the implementation of which Georgia intends to increase its influence in the North Caucasus. The presence of certain persecuted Georgia geopolitical objectives in making the Strategy says that the text of the document contains a separate chapter, entitled "Promotion of historical truth", which refers to the fact that in the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, the people of the North Caucasus became victims "ethnic cleansing, deportation and genocide", which should be the subject of a detailed "historical and legal research" [10].

With regard to the requirements of the need for the Russian authorities an active policy for the repatriation of Circassians, then, as the first requirement, implemented it is unlikely to be. It should be noted that there is a broad consensus on what a serious influence of such factors as the number of Circassians living in different countries of the world, which is about 3.5 million people to date on the issue of repatriation among the Circassian national movement. For states with the most numerous Circassian diaspora include Turkey (1.5 million), Russia (718 727 people), Jordan (203,000), Syria (85 000), Iraq (35,000), Libya (35 000), the Saudi Arabia (24000) [16].

When discussing the issue of the repatriation of the Circassian ethnic group on the territory of Russian Federation must be borne in mind that decisions on relocation to the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the XIX century were taken Circassians, mostly on a voluntary basis, which actively contributed to the propaganda carried out by Muslim clergy, with the support of the Turkish government, as well as British diplomacy that examined the highlanders as a factor that could be used against the Russian Empire in the struggle for geopolitical influence in the region. Despite the fact that the Russian authorities have been willing to provide the Circassians land area much larger than they had previously, and take fully all costs of relocation to a new place of residence within 5 years, according to various sources, at the time of the Ottoman Empire had left from 450 000 to 1.5 million residents of the West Caucasus, mostly from the area of Turkish influence [8, p. 84]. It should also be borne in mind that the bulk of the Circassians living in the moment outside of Russia, lost their native language and culture, and does not seek to move to the Russian Federation, being fully integrated into the society of other countries that are also unlikely to contribute to the effective repatriation policy.

The third requirement of the Circassian national movement to the Russian authorities – the creation of a single Circassian subject of the Russian Federation, in the short term and unlikely to be implemented because the adoption of such political decisions poses a major threat to the territorial integrity of the state. It should be noted that the main claim of the Circassian nationalists is that, in their opinion, now the Republic of Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachay-Cherkessia are not national entities, but only represent the republic with the Circassian component. Such a point of view can not be considered objective since the Russian Federation is the only country in the world where there are three subject title populated by Circassians. It is also necessary to remember that throughout history in Circassia was no political unity, the various sub-ethnic groups often acted as independent "players" in the relationship with each other and with external forces. In addition, we should not forget that the specificity of the administrative-territorial unit of the Russian Federation is that not all indigenous peoples have the political subjectivity (that is good or bad, it is necessary

to talk separately). In particular, the largest ethnic group in the country, Russian, not a national entity Federation (republic, or autonomous). In turn, the Circassian people such subjects as many as three.

It must be stressed that calls for the creation of a single Circassian Republic among the Circassian national movement sounded since the early 90s. The requirement for the creation of a "Greater Cherkessia" was first put forward at the II Congress Shapsugian people, held from October 30 to November 1, 1991. The essence of the "Great Circassia" project is to combine the Adygei, Cherkess and Kabardin in the nation, as well as the establishment of the Circassian government, including the territory of Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, and Sochi and Anapa. In the same period and was declared a separate Cherkessia Republic, which has not been recognized by the RSFSR leadership. In autumn 1992 Circassian organizations of Kabardino-Balkaria "Adyghe Khasa" and "Congress of Kabardian people," declared their intention to secede from Russia and establish an independent state. At that time, the slogan has received some support, however, the then President of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria Valery Kokov actively contributed to the fact that the secessionist movement was suppressed [14].

So, going to the conclusions, it should be noted that over the past decade the Circassian issue in the South of Russia is much more actual. A key factor was adopted in 2007 by the International Olympic Committee decided to hold the Winter Olympic Games 2014 in Sochi. This event did not miss taking advantage of the certain political forces within the country and abroad. Made a few years ago, a number of Circassian organizations (first of all, we are talking about the movement "Circassian congress") demands the cancellation of the Olympics in Sochi and the need to recognize the Russian events of the period of the Caucasian war a genocide of the Circassian people are merely a pretext for launching a nationalist project "Great Cherkessia "originating from the time of" parade of sovereignties ". The external forces are actively trying to use the "Circassian issue" in their own interests, Georgia is. Main objective of the Georgian parliament resolution "On recognition of the Circassian genocide, carried out by the Russian Empire," is that, having received a new ally in the region and at the same time have an impact on the destabilization of the Abkhazian-Circassian relations, experiencing in recent years is not the best of times, weaken Russia's position in the region.

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