

**COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST  
WOMEN (CEDAW)  
62nd session**

**Communication within CEDAW on violations committed by the Russian Federation  
on the territory of annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea (ARC)**

**Submitting NGOs:**

*'Almenda' Civic Education Center*  
*Center for Civil Liberties*  
*Human Rights Information Center*  
*Regional Center for Human Rights*  
*Ukrainian Center for Independent Political Research (UCIPR)*  
*Ukrainian Helsinki Human Rights Union*  
*International Charitable Organization "Roma Women Fund Chirikli"*

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**Introduction**

As the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereafter – “the Committee”) will consider the 8th periodic report of the Russian Federation on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women at its 62nd session, the Coalition of Ukrainian NGOs submits to the Committee the statement on the violations of women's rights committed by the Russian Federation on the territory of annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea. The statement aims to shed light on the facts of discrimination and proves the evidence of violations of rights of women and fundamental principles and provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (hereafter – “the Convention”) to members of the Committee and wider audience.

The international law stipulates that the obligations pursuant to the Convention should be implemented and applied both with regard to the citizens and non-citizens within the area of effective control of a particular state, even if such area is beyond the state borders of this state. This obligation perfectly concerns the Russian Federation, as it has annexed the Crimean peninsula of the independent state of Ukraine.

The report of the Russian Federation tabled with the Committee contains no information on enforcing the Convention in this context.

This statement builds on the materials collected by Ukrainian human rights organizations that are constantly monitoring human rights observance in Crimea. The methods were analysis of the law effective on the occupied peninsula; review of mass media and social media reports; providing legal and psychological aid to the victims of violations, in particular through public counselling offices; questioning the victims of violations and documenting their evidences; collecting confidential information from partner organizations and human right defenders who keep working on the peninsula but cannot directly report the violations due to the threat of persecution and pressure.

Victims of violations let NGOs use the information about their cases in this statement, however requesting not to make their real names public. If the Committee requests so, the confidential information about the persons referred to in the statement can be furnished to the Committee members confidentially to prove that such victims are real.

### **Violations of women's rights committed by the Russian Federation on the territory of annexed Autonomous Republic of Crimea**

#### **Discrimination of and violence against women**

1. Occupation and annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation that started on 20 February 2014 has given rise not only to drastic changes in all fields and at all levels of society, but also resulted in numerous human rights violations, including violations of women's rights, discrimination and violence against women. As a state, the Russian Federation has ignored the fact that it had a standing obligation to abide by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the occupied territory. The principles and provisions of the Convention are applicable in various situations, including when a state exercises its jurisdiction in such form as occupation or in such other forms of administration of a territory of a foreign state.
2. The occupation of Crimea was performed with the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, which at first were dressed in military uniforms without insignia (known in the media as the "green men" and the "polite Putin's people"). Although there was almost no direct use of weapons, the military presence of the Russian Federation initially underpinned the annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol.
3. The Russian invaders used the tactics of "human shields" of women and children in the capture of military and administrative facilities. This is not only a war crime in terms of the international armed conflict (in accordance with Article 2, common to the four Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims of 1949. Any cases of military occupation are classified as an international armed conflict, even if they involve no armed resistance), it is a direct violation of Article 1 of the Convention, as it constitutes a direct physical as well as moral and psychological violence, infringement on the lives and health of women and children. Apart from rich evidence thereof recorded by journalists, civic activists, this fact was confirmed by President V.Putin himself at a press-conference on 4 March 2014 (See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PoQXvPsBBn8>) and in the film called 'Crimea. The Path to the Motherland' (March, 2015). The Russian President has determined that such tactics has been chosen and utilized by intention. 'Let the servicemen dare shoot at their own people. Russian soldiers will be standing behind the people, not in front of them, but behind. Let them dare shoot at their women and children', says V. Putin.

#### **Violations of obligations on the elimination and prevention of domestic violence**

4. The state exerting effective control over a certain territory is responsible for the implementation of the Convention in full and for ensuring the rights of women. The occupation of Crimea resulted in a complete change of applicable Ukraine law to the law of the Russian Federation. Such change has given rise to the curtailing and restriction of the options women can use to defend their rights, including the right not to be subjected to domestic violence. Currently, it is impossible to monitor how the authorities of the occupied Crimea address the cases of domestic violence and prevent the violence, whereas statistical data are not available, and the respective authorities are not about to provide such information. A respective request was filed with the authorities of the Republic of Crimea, however, no answer was received. It is, thus, impossible to evaluate the capacity of the

occupation power to prevent and investigate crimes associated with gender violence, including domestic violence.

5. The Law of Ukraine on the Prevention of Domestic Violence (№ 2789–III)<sup>1</sup>, like other Ukraine legislation, has not been applied on the territory of occupied Crimea since early 2014. Respective policies have been shut down, the system of referral of the victims of domestic violence does not operate any more, assistance to victims and prevention of offenses associated with such crimes have been disabled.
6. It is only possible to indirectly assess the number of victims of domestic violence that are deprived of a possibility to receive respective legal, social, preventive aid. As we were aware of the end of 2013 situation and know general trends in Ukraine, we can state confidently that at least 5,500-6,000 women have suffered from domestic violence in Crimea annually since the occupation of the peninsula. These conclusions are based on statistical data available in Ukraine. According to them, 4,804 claims regarding domestic violence in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and 842 claims in the city of Sevastopol were registered in 2013. 85-90% of such claims were submitted by women. This number was growing 10-20% annually throughout Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol. It should be mentioned that Crimea performed the best in terms of the number of pre-trial investigations of domestic violence-related crimes in Ukraine. Since the annexation started, it has been impossible to determine accurate number of victims, as no separate statistical data regarding such crimes and other domestic violence-related events is collected on the occupied territory.
7. The mechanism of addressing the detected facts or threats of domestic violence is not functional on the territory of occupied Crimea and Sevastopol. Respectively, the Procedure of Consideration of Claims and Reports about Domestic Violence or its Real Threats (Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine # 616 of 26 April 2003) stipulating for the agents the mechanism to address the determined facts or threats of domestic violence and the Instruction on the Cooperation of Structural Units Responsible for the Implementation of State Policy on the Prevention of Domestic Violence, Child Care Service Units, Centres of Social Services for Families, Children and Youth, and Law Enforcement Agencies regarding the Prevention of Domestic Violence (Order of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports and Ministry of Internal Affairs # 3131/386 of 7 September 2009) are not applied any more.
8. At least 80% of local front-line police officers of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol had received training on the prevention and addressing the victims of domestic violence through special programmes. Currently, it is impossible to determine whether the occupation power maintains the capacity of law enforcement agencies to protect women from domestic violence. (NGO professionals or even the residents of Crimea, who do not want publicity due to the persecution concerns, claim that such work is not being carried out).
9. Neither respective awareness raising events, nor correction programmes are being conducted in Crimea for the perpetrators of domestic violence. As regards 2013, the law enforcement authorities of Crimea and Sevastopol referred 155 and 48 persons respectively to correctional programmes. 574 awareness raising events and trainings were conducted for preventing domestic violence.
10. No attention is paid to prevention either. (2,434 and 434 persons were listed on a preventive record in the law enforcement authorities of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol respectively in 2013, 2,726 and 390 official warnings were made, 171 and 51 preventive records were made). It is also unknown what kind of assistance is provided to vulnerable families (families that found themselves in difficult life circumstances) with regard to domestic violence. 420 such families were listed in the records of centres of social services for families, children and youth, 107 families received social supervision from centres of social services for families, children and youth. In cases of need, the centres of social services for families, children and youth provided regular help to victims of domestic violence. 680 such persons in total received social services associated with domestic violence in 2013.
11. The following institutions working in the field of domestic violence prevention have ceased their activities: the Crimean Republican Institution “Centre of Social and Psychological Assistance” that

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<sup>1</sup> The Law of Ukraine on the Prevention of Domestic Violence [Electronic resource], See: <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2789-14>

provided psychological, socio-educational, socio-medical, information and legal services; human rights centre “Commonwealth” that provided legal services to persons who suffered from domestic violence; NGO “Renewal” that conducted psycho-correctional rehabilitation of victims of domestic violence; Crimean Charitable Fund “Centre of Social Protection and Support” that provided psychological and legal services and conducted preventive activities.

12. No similar institutional mechanism has been established.

#### **Violation of the right to free choice of profession**

13. Feminization of the education, with women-dominated positions of school teacher is traditionally featured by particular vulnerability and poor social security of women occupied in this field (it becomes apparent in terms of wages, conditions of labour, etc.). In extraordinary circumstances such group of women (in whole or in part) can become particularly vulnerable and become subject to discrimination originating from state authorities and institutions, society, mass media. Given all those transformations that have started in almost all fields of social life since the annexation of peninsula, everything associated with Ukraine was regarded as undesirable, was officially or unofficially forbidden and was considered hostile. The first victims of such xenophobic policy and attitudes were teachers and lectures in subjects directly connected with Ukrainian context: Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature, History of Ukraine, Cultural Studies, Ukrainian Studies, etc. This group is made up almost or sometimes entirely of female teachers.
14. In fact, all of them became unemployed, their professional activities have been banned or they were made to change their job. Sometimes they were subject to direct pressure, threats, mockery and repressions and had to change their residence, i.e., move to safer regions of Ukraine. Such information was provided to NGOs by both teachers of secondary schools and lecturers of universities. First and foremost, the situation has affected teachers of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature. The drastic shortage of teachers of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature did take place in practice. However, to conceal this fact, the administration of schools used disguised forms such as reducing the number of hours for certain subjects, replacing some subjects with others, etc. These modifications served as a pretext to dismiss teachers due to a small number of hours of the lessons they could teach, or they were offered to accept unfavourable conditions. According to the clarifications of the Ministry of education of Crimea of 25 June 2014 # 01-14/382, “teaching and studying state languages of the Republic of Crimea (Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar) shall not be detrimental to teaching and studying the state language of the Russian Federation”, i.e. Russian. As a result, 15 hours are allocated for Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature – the same number of hours allocated for foreign languages (which, in fact, equates children’s mother tongue to a foreign language). Russian was allocated 28 hours. Enforced re-training became another form of violation of the right to free choice of profession: thus, as there was no choice, teachers of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature had to re-train to become teachers of Russian. Such re-training did not necessarily granted employment. Cynically, the law sets forth that if a diploma doesn’t specify a respective qualification (as in this case: not all teachers were qualified by their diplomas to teach both Ukrainian and Russian), then even after a respective teacher undergoes “professional development”, he or she does not have a formal right to get a job pursuant to their profession.
15. According to the approximate data, there were some 2,500 teachers of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature in Crimea and the city of Sevastopol at the start of the annexation. The state funded the re-training for only 700 teachers. The rest could undergo it at their own expense. The city of Yevpatoria can be an illustrative example: at the start of the annexation of Crimea, there were 80 teachers of Ukrainian and Ukrainian Literature, and in early 2015-2016 academic year, only 20 teachers left.
16. Contrary to the Constitution of Crimea that recognizes three state languages – Russian, Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar – the State Council of Crimea adopted the “Law on Education” on 17 June 2015. Pursuant to this “law”, subjects should be taught at state schools in the state language of the Russian Federation and in accordance with federal education standards. This law does not provide for teaching in other state languages (Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar). Notwithstanding the right of parents to demand teaching in other languages, this right is not observed in practice. Thus, the parents do confirm (we received information from female citizen C.) that they receive pushy recommendations

not to submit respective applications. It is explained to them that it would result in a negative attitude to their child, stand in the way of high-quality education, annoy the administration, cause “problems” for both parents and children and create problems in school environment for a child, etc.

17. As of the beginning of annexation (2013/2014 academic year), Crimea and Sevastopol had 8 Ukrainian schools (2,215 pupils, 103 classes), 15 secondary schools in which subjects were taught in Crimean Tatar (2,982 pupils, 182 classes), 142 schools in which subjects were taught in Ukrainian and Russian (8,536 pupils, 602 classes), 31 schools in which subjects were taught in three languages (Ukrainian, Russian and Crimean Tatar). Sevastopol had 10 schools with both Ukrainian and Russian classes (994 pupils were taught in Ukrainian), 22 schools in which subjects were taught in Russian and Crimean Tatar (638 pupils were taught in Crimean Tatar – this number amounts to 66 classes), 31 schools in which subjects were taught in three languages (1,284 pupils were taught in Crimean Tatar – this number amounts to 111 classes). The situation with Ukrainian classes and schools became totally critical at the start of 2015/2016 academic year. All schools, in which subjects had been taught in Ukrainian before the occupation, are now mixed-language schools. The number of pupils taught in Ukrainian drastically decreased (to reach about 1% of pupils). This year, no single Ukrainian class has been created. The absence of respective appeals from parents of pupils was used as a formal pretext. However, in fact, it is the policy of the so-called authorities of Crimea aimed at elimination, “squeezing out” everything Ukrainian, at intimidation and blackmailing of those who disagree, at dismissal of those who – in the opinion of the occupation power – do not meet the standards of “reliability”. 8% of pupils who had been educated in Ukrainian had to flee Crimea and enter universities elsewhere in Ukraine.
18. The reduction of the number of Ukrainian schools and classes, which is the most evident and noticeable, is accompanied by more disguised “squeezing out” of everything connected with Ukrainian component in education: History of Ukraine, Ukrainian Literature have disappeared from the curricula of humanities, the context of textbooks has been changed, all Ukrainian symbols have vanished, a reference to any Ukrainian cultural or historical sources is not encouraged (more often – prohibited). In such a situation, these are not just teachers of Ukrainian-related subjects who become unnecessary. Even Russian teachers whose opinions and beliefs differ from official policy of the so-called authorities are not welcome. (A lecturer in Law, Russian, native resident of Crimea whose name is P. said that it had been her opinions and pro-Ukrainian attitudes that let the administration of her university to create such circumstances that gave rise to groundless accusations of the “lack of competence and unprofessionalism”. It all caused awful pressure and humiliation and, eventually, the woman was dismissed and had to move to continental Ukraine due to the concerns of safety and threat to life). There are hundreds of such examples. Teachers of Crimean Tatar and subjects taught in this language suffer less; however, they are also subject to persecution.
19. Thus, the elimination of everything Ukrainian and Crimean Tatar from the education system of Crimea has affected a big group of women, while subjecting them to inequality and discrimination. Such state of affairs is an explicit violation of the fundamental principles and spirit of the Convention.

#### **Discrimination of women in the field of employment**

20. The nationalization of property of enterprises, institutions and organizations in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol gave rise to risks and posed an immediate threat to women as regards ensuring their rights in the field of employment, thus being an explicit violation of Article 11 of the Convention. Women are the first to be dismissed, even if they should be protected pursuant to respective legislation provided for both by this and by other Conventions.
21. Article 9 of the Convention of the International Labor Organization (ILO) 183 concerning the revision of the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised) of 1952 provides for the protection of maternity, preservation of a job and prevention of discrimination (hereafter – the “ILO Convention 183”). It also sets forth an obligation to take measures necessary to ensure that pregnancy and delivery are not regarded as reasons to discriminate against women in the field of employment. Article 8 of the ILO Convention 183 grants the right to a woman to return to the same position or an equivalent position paid at the same rate at the end of her maternity leave.

22. From March 2014 to March 2015 more than 300 enterprises, institutions and organizations owned by the state and trade unions were nationalized on the territory of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. More than 280 private enterprises were nationalized, too. In particular, there are several normative legal acts regulating an issue of state property: the Regulations of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea # 2042-6/14 [1], # 1950-6/14 [2], # 2079-6/14 [3], # 2084-6/14 [4], # 1757-6/14 [5], # 1837-6/14 [6], # 1948-6/14 [7]; # 2267-6/14 [8], # 2026-6/14 [9], # 18366/14 [10], Resolutions of the Council of Ministers of Crimea # 1119-p [11], # 783-p [12]. As regards private property, see the Regulation of the State Council of the Republic of Crimea # 2085-6/14 [13], Regulation of the Government of Sevastopol # 118-ПП [14] and # 123-ПП [15], and Resolution of the Council of Ministers of Crimea # 316 [16].
23. Labour legislation of Ukraine provides pregnant women and women with children with more guarantees in cases of liquidation of an enterprise at which they were employed. Thus, in a case of a complete liquidation of an enterprise, a person could be dismissed only if a new job is offered. In the period of employment, a respective employee shall receive his/her previous average salary, however, for a period not exceeding three months after the expiry of a labour agreement (Art. 184 of the Labour Code of Ukraine). The same article of the Labour Code of the Russian Federation does not have a rule on obligatory provision of a new job and preserving a salary for three months.
24. Due to these reasons, the nationalization was conducted in such a way that the actual operation of nationalized objects remained unaffected. However, as the legal status of certain enterprises has been changed, it became a pretext for discriminatory dismissal of employees.
25. In particular, a female citizen D. (resides in Alushta town) who is a mother of six underage children, one of whom is still breastfed, became a victim of indirect discrimination and was dismissed due to the nationalization of one of the institutions of the Trade Union Federation of Ukraine. She was dismissed when she was on a maternity leave. Upon the dismissal, the women was deprived of social benefits and guarantees, namely of the right to receive dismissal assistance, state insurance until a child becomes three years old, monthly compensation payments for mothers who have children under three years old, etc. At the same time, the vast majority of other employees got the jobs at a “new” institution. Female citizen D. appealed her dismissal before a court. The court of first circuit did not find a violation of her rights ([17]). Currently, the case is being considered by a court of appeal.
26. Thus, the occupation of Crimea by the Russian Federation deprived women of the guarantees they had enjoyed pursuant to Ukrainian legislation. Apart from the guarantees in case of dismissal, there were also various forms of assistance to mothers, in particular, a maternity leave, monetary payments for pregnancy and delivery, delivery payments, etc.

[1] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/ua/act/12077>

[2] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/11932>

[3] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/12112>

[4] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/12117>

[5] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/11761>

[6] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/11842>

[7] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/11930>

[8] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/12328>

[9] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/12055>

[10] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/en/act/11841>

[11] URL: [http://rk.gov.ru/rus/file/pub/pub\\_235197.pdf](http://rk.gov.ru/rus/file/pub/pub_235197.pdf)

[12] URL: [http://rk.gov.ru/rus/file/pub/pub\\_257963.pdf](http://rk.gov.ru/rus/file/pub/pub_257963.pdf)

[13] URL: <http://crimea.gov.ru/act/12118>

[14] URL: <https://sevastopol.gov.ru/docs/253/3903/>

[15] URL: [https://sevastopol.gov.ru/files/iblock/1b5/convert\\_jpg\\_to\\_pdf.net\\_2015\\_05\\_29\\_09\\_07\\_12.pdf](https://sevastopol.gov.ru/files/iblock/1b5/convert_jpg_to_pdf.net_2015_05_29_09_07_12.pdf)

[16] URL: This document may be obtained only subject to prior arrangement with “Harant” company:

<http://ivo.garant.ru/#/document/23702505/paragraph/3>

[17] URL: [http://alushta.krm.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud\\_delo&srv\\_num=1&name\\_op=doc&number=79194435&delo\\_id=1540005&new=0&text\\_number=1](http://alushta.krm.sudrf.ru/modules.php?name=sud_delo&srv_num=1&name_op=doc&number=79194435&delo_id=1540005&new=0&text_number=1)

## **Violations of obligations to eradicate discrimination resulting from the activities of state authorities and institutions**

27. The impossibility to implement the principle of equality between women and men by means of law and other respective official activities violates Article 2 of the Convention. Russia either does not provide respective support of state authorities and intuitions to women to observe their rights, or incapacitates such implementation and gives rise to the *de facto* discrimination.
28. It is what happened in the case of a female citizen D. (residing in Alushta town), mother of six underage children. Her case was mentioned before. Due to the change of applicable law, her rights of a mother of many children were dismissed without her consent. Such dismissal resulted from the effect of Russian law that had been introduced on the territory of the Crimean peninsula at the end of March 2014 and that respectively cancelled Ukrainian laws such as the Law of Ukraine on the Protection of Childhood, on Pensions and Particular Services Served for the sake of Ukraine, on State Awards of Ukraine. In this case, the rights of the female citizen D. as a mother of many children, the rights of a large family – along with the rights of the child – are violated.
29. The responses the female citizen D. received in answer to her official inquiries submitted to the so-called Apparatus of the Council of Ministers of Crimea confirm that the application of Russian law narrows down and cancels the rights of a mother of a large family and those of a large family that used to be effective in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea before 20 February 2014. Pursuant to the laws of Ukraine, the female citizen D. could receive an honourable rank of the “Mother-Heroine” that would provide her a with number of preferences and benefits, namely: early retirement, inclusion of the periods of maternity leaves to the insured years of pensionable service, increased amount of a pension, etc. The female citizen D. submitted a respective case against the Government of Crimea.
30. Given that by the end of 2013, in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol there were 2,597 and 86 Mother-Heroines respectively, and taking into account that the number of such mothers used to increase each year, it can be confidently claimed that Russia cancels and narrows down various aspects of rights of several thousands of mothers of large families.

## **Restriction of possibilities to own property**

31. The deprivation of women of a legal autonomy and restriction thereof in a possibility to independently own the property creates limitations of independent management of households of women, development of their own businesses. It all restricts the ability of women to provide for themselves and their children, makes them dependent on their husbands and, thus, introduces inequality between spouses that is in breach of Article 15 of the Convention. After the annexation of Crimea, such restriction was applied to a vast part of certain groups of women as regards their right to free receipt of land plot for certain designated use thereof.
32. Ukrainian laws that had been effective before the annexation of Crimea provided for the allocation of land plots for certain groups of citizens entitled to benefits, for instance, they granted each adult member of a large family a right to freely receive land plots for certain designated use thereof. Such laws provided a woman with the same opportunity to receive a land plot with her husband. Such land plot could be used for the construction of own house, gardening, building of a summer house, etc. It provided equal opportunities for both women and men, as it granted certain independence to women.
33. The application of Russian laws on the territory of annexed Crimea has cancelled and narrowed down this rights, as pursuant to Article 3 of the so-called Law of the Republic of Crimea # 66-ZKR on the Provision of Land Plots that Are in State or Municipal Ownership and on Some Issues of Land Relations, a family can receive only one land plot. There is also no provision for the priority allocation of land plots to large families.
34. The female citizen D. (she has already been mentioned in paras 25, 28-29 as regards the violation of her rights) has brought a case before the court against the Government of Crimea. She argues the violation of her right as a female who is a mother of a large family to independently (independently from her husband and on the same terms as he does) receive a land plot for certain designated use thereof.

35. The case of the female citizen D. provides grounds to claim multiple violations of women's rights and combination of different types of discrimination.

### **Discrimination of Roma women**

36. The annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation has brought down to pieces the efforts of the Ukrainian Government aimed at the protection and integration of Roma. Thus, 2013 Order of the President of Ukraine on the Strategy of Protection and Integration of Roma National Minority in Ukrainian Society by 2020 has been cancelled. At the same time, the Russian government takes no actions to improve the socio-economic status of Roma. As a result, Roma remain a socially and economically marginalized national minority.
37. Promoting respect and tolerance towards Roma has been undermined even by means of a return to such name of this transnational group as "Gipsy" in Russian documents. This name has been recognized as discriminatory and is not used in any international treaties.
38. According to estimations, 3,000-4,000 Roma people reside in Crimea, half of them are females. Many of them suffer from certain types of discrimination; the majority are victims of several kinds of discrimination. Thus, according to the results of a survey, the majority of them admitted to being victims of domestic violence. As respective Ukrainian governmental programmes have been shut down, they have almost no place to go to seek help. Early marriages make the majority of girls drop out of school. Having no education, they do not have a further possibility to get a job and, thus, become fully dependent on their husbands.
39. The difficulties that Roma experience with receiving Russian citizenship and the subsequent absence of medical certificates for those who are not citizens have made it more difficult and sometimes even impossible for Roma women to benefit from medical services. The state pays no effort to monitor the health condition of Roma women. Roma women tend to avoid seeing a doctor. The reasons for that are traditional superstitions (that Roma women can be examined only by female doctors) and disregard they are facing at medical institutions. According to Roma mediators, women admit that the attitude towards them in hospitals and medical institutions is not just hostile, but explicitly humiliating and disrespectful. They are not just denied medical help for no reason (in particular, a female called Z. who had cancer was denied treatment), they are not explained different types of treatment, rights to receive a certain status because of a certain type of disease, social benefits, etc.
40. The hate speech used by the media bears the similar disregard and scorn: "These women in colourful skirts dragging back and forth from dawn till sunset at the railway stations of Simferopol and other Crimean cities can be considered professional beggars, fortune-tellers, robbers..."
41. As a state, the Russian Federation takes no action to protect Roma women against discrimination.

### **Restrictions on the exercise of the right to health by women - representatives of the group of PLWA**

42. Since the annexation of Crimea, the Russian Federation applied many reactionary measures that adversely affected the health of women (for example, the restriction of access to health care for women who don't have Russian passports has already been mentioned in this report). The women which experienced a most negative impact are women living with HIV/AIDS in need of opioid substitution therapy (OST). According to experts, the total number of OST clients in Crimea and Sevastopol is about 800 people, of which women constitute about 30%. Such programs were criminalized and closed by the Russian Federation; the obtaining or possession of drugs necessary for OST is a criminal offense under the legislation of the Russian Federation. Back in May 2014, the United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia predicted a sharp increase in the HIV prevalence and the increasing risk to public health as a result of policy changes in Crimea, including the criminalization and prohibition of the use of methadone OST for injecting drug users. The methadone therapy is officially supported by the WHO, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and is seen as the most effective treatment for opiate addiction.
43. According to the UN OHCHR, from March 2014 to May 2015, at least 30 of these persons have died. Experts believe that the number of victims will increase. Some of them will return to illegal drug use. In



the Russian Federation, which still does not recognize the European and international experience, the medication which is considered the medicines worldwide, has been wrongly attributed to drugs and banned for use.

44. The statement by the resident of Crimea Oksana, who arrived to Kyiv for help, confirms the negative effects of termination of OST: "I came here from Simferopol. I have been in the OST program since 2007, I can't do without it. Previously, I took heroin, poppy extract, different drugs, touched the bottom, as they say... The Program helped me to put in order both my personal life and job, in a word, everything. When in 2007 I started taking methadone as treatment, I recovered and started my own small business. I established relations with relatives, got married ... and there were no signs of trouble until the referendum was held in Crimea and it became a Russian peninsula. In the Russian Federation the OST program is prohibited, so it was terminated in Crimea".

#### **Restriction of right to the freedom of religion**

45. High level of religious freedom in Ukraine has contributed to the establishment of religious pluralism and tolerance in Ukrainian society. This situation has changed dramatically in Crimea since its unlawful annexation. Restrictive laws of the Russian Federation, the requirements for obligatory repeated registration of religious organizations that are almost impossible to comply with (including the requirement that the founders of such organizations adopt Russian citizenship), restriction of the freedom of speech, freedom of expression and peaceful assemblies and, eventually, systematic repressions and administrative persecution of clergy restrict the right to the freedom of religion of all believers of Crimea.
46. Given that the majority of believers, parishioners of religious communities are females, it can be pointed out that they experience considerable restrictions in their fundamental rights to the freedom of conscience and religion. According to the official statistics of the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine, as of early 2014, 2,220 religious organizations (42 religious confessions) were operating on the territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. This number comprises hundreds of believers, vast majority of whom are females. After the occupation of Crimea, the authorities of the Russian Federation adopted the law on obligatory repeated registration of all religious and civic organizations operating in Crimea. This decision became one of the tools to struggle with pro-Ukrainian communities and any people holding the opinions that do not correspond to attitudes of official authorities and who do not support the aggression of Russia against territorial sovereignty of Ukraine. Russian legislation on combating extremism became another tool of pressure on a religious community of Crimea. Russian authorities also tried to subordinate Ukrainian religious communities of Crimea to Russian religious centres. (So far, only 5-10% of religious organizations have managed to undergo the procedure of repeated registration). The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate, as well the Muslims of Crimea who represent the Crimean Tatar People were the first targets of pressure. A threat to preservation of the right to private property arose, as well as a threat to accession to temples and other places of worship of religious communities. Such situation has created a real threat for an enormous group of female believers as regards the restriction of their rights and has challenged the freedom of religion throughout the whole peninsula.
47. Russian migration policy towards foreigners has incapacitated the presence and residence of those foreigners who worked in Crimean religious communities and who retained their foreign citizenship. The actual authorities of Crimea started regarding citizens of Ukraine as foreigners as well. They became outlaws, notwithstanding even their permanent residence on the peninsula. Feeling the necessity to continue their rites and worship, the clergy of many churches had to move their families from Crimea and stay in Crimea only for a period allowed by law. Such situation has resulted in an actual disconnection of families that, in turn, has first and foremost affected women and children. All clergy of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan Patriarchate, Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and some evangelical Protestant churches had to move their families out of the peninsula. In November 2014, three Catholic nuns of the Monastery of Franciscan Missioners named after Virgin Mary that was functioning since 1997 had to flee Crimea. They were denied a right to temporary residence because their religious organization had failed to undergo the repeated registration. Such

policy of Russia should be considered as an enforced deportation of clergy and members of their families from Crimea.

48. The restriction of the freedom of religion affects all citizens of unlawfully annexed Crimea. But given that women make up the vast majority of parishioners, we claim that women are those who have suffered the most from the restriction of the freedom of religion and of their cultural rights in Crimea.
49. The Russian Federation is directly responsible for the indicated facts of violations or failure to observe the provisions of the Convention.