

Language Use among Crimean Tatars in Ukraine: Context and Practice

A Report

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Abstract: *This report, part of an ongoing research project, seeks to shed light on the language use of Crimean Tatars in Ukraine today. After Russia’s annexation of Ukraine’s Autonomous Republic of Crimea in 2014, thousands of Crimean Tatars fled the Black Sea peninsula for mainland Ukraine, where they constitute one of the largest groups of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country. In cities like Kyiv and L’viv, displaced members of this Sunni Muslim national minority are adapting to new communicative practices and confronting a situation not only of political bilingualism, but of political trilingualism. In interviews, Crimean Tatar respondents indicate that their language use is strongly inflected by ethnic and national identities in a process of renegotiation. Attending to their views and giving a venue for their voices allows us to come to grips with Ukraine’s dynamic linguistic landscape and to focus on the understudied question of Ukraine’s multilingualism and its relation to national identity construction.*

Keywords: *Crimean Tatars, Crimea, Ukraine, Crimean Tatar language, annexation of Crimea*

Language use in Ukraine is often studied in the context of a putative Ukrainian-Russian linguistic bifurcation or with a view to the politicization of language and its relations to regional and national identities. In this report, which is a part of an ongoing research project, I seek to add depth and context to this conventional scholarship by foregrounding the views and the voices of Crimean Tatars—a Sunni Muslim national minority profoundly affected by