

SPEECH BY: DATO SERI DR MAHATHIR BIN MOHAMAD
(PRIME MINISTER)

EVENT: THE PRESENTATION OF DONATION BY THE GOVERNMENT
OF MALAYSIA TO THE CRIMEA AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC

VENUE: CRIMEA AUTONOMOUS REPUBLIC

DATE: 15 JUL 2003

TIME:

Let me first thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for the very warm welcome and hospitality that has been accorded to me and my wife, as well as members of the Malaysian delegation.

2. I am personally very heartened to be part of this commemorative occasion to honour the entire Tatar population in Crimea, who became victims of Stalin's oppressive policies during the Second World War. The tragic events where approximately 188, 626 Tatars were forcibly deported en masse from their own lands and villages to Central Asia and other far away parts of the Soviet Union will always be remembered as a time of great sorrow and sadness in the history of the Republic. Many died of diseases, exhaustion and malnutrition in the process. Our hearts go out to the victims and their descendants of this inhuman and brutal policy.

3. I understand that the Crimea Autonomous Republic has been working hard to resettle the Tatar returnees and attend to their needs. We empathise with the Crimean Tatars' struggle to rebuild their lives and reclaim their national and cultural rights in the face of difficult social and economic obstacles.

4. In solidarity with the people of the Crimea Autonomous Republic, the Government of Malaysia is pleased to contribute a sum of US\$ 10,000 for the reconstruction of the mosque in the city of Evpatoria. We sincerely hope that this modest contribution from us could help bring back in a small way the environment with which you have been familiar with.

5. I extend to all of you my best wishes with the sincere hope that your government with the help of the international community would be able to overcome the problems related to the resettlement of the Crimean Tatars. Please accept this contribution in the spirit of friendship between Malaysia and the Crimea Autonomous Republic.

