



A Comparative View Of Ahıska Turks: Exile And History

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ABSTRACT

The Ahıska Region, which constitutes the study area, is located within the borders of today's Georgia. Throughout history, the Ahıska Region has served as a gateway to the Caucasus. Therefore, the Ahıska region has a great strategic importance. In 1921, with the Moscow Agreement, the Meskhetian Turks came under the Soviet Union. The first exile took place on the orders of Stalin in 1944 and never again could the Ahıska Turks return to their homeland. Ahıska Turks who immigrated to Uzbekistan were subjected to bloody attacks here and had to migrate again. The last exile took place in the Krasnodar region. After Exile has experienced an intense wave of migration to Turkey and the United States. Ahıska Turks have been exposed to human rights violations and discrimination. Even today Meskhetian Turks return to their homeland and the struggle continues in this direction has found support from the Council of Europe and Turkey. The purpose of this study is to investigate the causes of exiles exposed to Ahıska Turks in detail and to examine the effects of these exiles on Ahıska Turks. At the same time, human rights violations and discriminations experienced by Ahıska Turks in the regions they migrated to were addressed. Despite all the pressures and assimilation efforts, the Ahıska Turks preserved their national unity and solidarity.

Keywords: Ahıska Turks, Exile, Racist Attacks, Migration, Human Rights Violations and Discrimination.

INTRODUCTION

Meskhetian region called the area, in the northeast of Turkey, is located within the borders of present-day Georgia. Some of the most important settlements of Ahıska city are Adıgön, Aspinza and Ahılkelek (Zeyrek, 2001: 15-175). Since the Ahıska Region is in a geography with efficient streams, the livelihood of the population is based on animal husbandry and agriculture. Meskhetian District is also neighbor to the border with Turkey which is 15 km away. Ahıska Turks are descendants of Turks and have a Muslim population. Ahıska Region is one of the oldest settlements in history and its origins are based on Kıpçaklar. Moreover, Bun-Turks, one of the first Turks, lived here and faced during the expedition of Alexander (Zeyrek, 2001: 15- 175). The name Ahıska is mentioned in his book, Dede Korkut, as Ak-Sika, Ak-Kale (Zeyrek, 2001: 15 - 175). Continuous conflicts of interest have occurred on Ahıska lands and Ahıska Region is a region open to invasions. As a result of the expedition organized by Sultan Alparslan, the sovereignty of Ahıska Region passed to the Seljuk State (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). With the Moscow Agreement signed in 1921, the Ahıska Region was connected to the Soviet Union and Turkish soldiers had to leave the region. The Russians applied the Christianization policies and put pressure on Ahıska Turks and made assimilation studies. Meskhetian Turks to the region that borders with Turkey was perceived as a threat. In 1944, upon the order of Stalin, an exile decision was made and the Ahıska Turks had to leave their native land. Georgians and Armenians were settled in the lands where the Ahıska Turks were exiled. Various reasons were put forward for other exiled communities, but there was no valid reason for Ahıska Turks. Ahıska Turks were exiled to Central Asian countries, especially Uzbekistan. As a result of this exile, the Ahıska Turks could not return to their homes again, and with this exile, the longing of the Ahıska Turks was never finished. The Ahıska Turks experienced bloody attacks with the events of Fergana and were exposed to a second exile. Ahıska Turks, who maintained good relations with Uzbekistan, had to leave the region as a result of these attacks and started to migrate to the inner parts of Russia. With immigration to the Krasnodar region, Ahıska Turks faced human rights violations and discrimination. Ahıska Turks are deprived of their right to a residence permit and a right to citizenship. All rights, especially the right to education and the right to health,

were confiscated. Ahıska Turks, who were not granted citizenship rights, had to leave the Krasnodar region as a result of these pressures. Most of the migration to America and became the Krasnodar region for Turkey. In the face of the persecution of Ahıska Turks, America gave permission to immigrate to Ahıska Turks and immigration to America started. The Ahıska Turks who immigrated to America filled the labor shortage and adapted to the region in a short time. The struggle of the Ahıska Turks to return homeland continues today. If Georgia wants to become a member of the European Union, it must find a solution to the issue of Ahıska Turks. Although Georgia promised to the Council of Europe, it acted in an unstable manner and did not take any action on this matter. Therefore, the issue of Ahıska Turks could not be resolved. Ahıska Turks are still called a stateless community. In the geographies they live in, they have always been taken to the second plan and have been exposed to exclusion. Today, Ahıska Turks live in many regions other than their own homeland. Especially the Ahıska Turks living in the Krasnodar region have been the most exposed to human rights violations and discrimination. They are subjected to ill-treatment because they are excluded by the locals.

For the thesis research, analysis has been made starting from the historical process of Ahıska Turks. The difficulties and struggles encountered in this study were also examined. Deep investigations have been carried out on why the Ahıska Turks problem cannot be solved. This problem will not be solved unless Ahıska Turks return to their home country. The problem of Ahıska Turks continues today, especially since Georgia and the Russian Federation do not display positive approaches.

1. AHISKA TURKS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Macedonian King Alexander met with Kipchak and Bun Turks in the Ahıska region during the Caucasian campaign (Zeyrek, 2001: 15 - 175). Bun-Turks are known as the ancestors of Ahıska Turks. The Ottoman Empire conquered the region of Ahıska with the war of Calder, so Calder Province became the strategic center of the Ottoman Empire. Although the Ahıska Region was occupied by Arabs, Byzantines and Sassanids, they always kept the Turkish population. Ahıska Turks managed to protect their Turkish identity. The city of Ahıska has been under Ottoman rule for about 250 years. When the Russians conquered the region, the city of Ahıska came under Ottoman rule and surrendered to the Russians. Although the origins of Ahıska Turks are based on Kipchaks, Kipchaks are not the first Turkish community to settle in Ahıska region. The Ahıska region, conquered by Sultan Alparslan in 1068, was included in the territory of the Seljuk State (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). The most important ethnic element that strengthened the Ahıska region and made it a permanent power in the region was that the region had Turkish origins.

During the conquests, the Ottoman Empire applied the policy of Turkification to the regions it conquered. In line with this policy, he placed the Turkish population brought from Konya, Tokat and Yozgat in the Ahıska Region (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). The aim of this Turkification policy is to defend the region completely and contribute to the Islamization of the region during any attack.

After the Ahıska Region was given to the Russians as war compensation in 1829, it continued to exist under the rule of the Russians until 1918 (Sarı, 2015: 153-179). After this agreement was signed, the years of exile of Ahıska Turks full of struggles began to emerge. Ahıska Turks, who used the name "Caucasian Turks" before the exile started, started to use the name "Ahıska Turks" to distinguish themselves after the exile. The Russians created pressure in the region by using Russification and Christianization policies and caused the Ahıska Turks living there to leave their homeland. The Christian population was placed by the Russians in the lands that Muslims had to leave and the grounds for the Christianization of the Caucasus were formed.

When we look at it, the main purpose of the Russians is to settle the population of Armenian, Georgian and Russian origin in this region and ensure permanentness in the region. Ahıska Turks, who have a Muslim population, have been subjected to various pressures through Christianity. Therefore, freedoms of religion and beliefs of Muslims were taken away. Those who oppose these restrictions and pressures were either exiled or slaughtered.

Ahıska Turks are very happy that the Ottoman Empire conquered the region. Thanks to these conquests, the Ottoman Empire became a glimmer of hope for Ahıska Turks. But this joy did not last long because the Russians started to organize massacres on the grounds that they were happy to come to the region. Ahıska Turks in the Communist Revolution of 1917, which provides "self-determination" has decided to participate in and benefit from about Turkey because of the problems they encounter. The Ahıska region was once again left to the Soviet Union with the Batumi Agreement so that they continued their lives under pressure and oppression until 1944 (Akpınar, 2016: 327 - 343)

When we look after 1944, the persecuted exile life of Ahıska Turks has started, and this persecution continues today. The history of Ahıska region dates to before Christ and the Turkish principality, which has been in existence for the longest time in Anatolia, is known as Atabek. In fact, the fate of the Ahıska Turks resembled the fate of the Kipchaks, who we know as their ancestors. Since Kipchaks were exiled by the Russians at the time, Kipchaks settled in Ahıska region, but Kipchaks are not the first Turkish community to settle in Ahıska region. Ahıska region has been a homeland for Turkish tribes since the past, but Turkish communities that came to the region after Kipchaks could not provide permanent settlement here because Ahıska Region is always open to invasions and attacks due to its geographical location. Kipchaks managed to play an important role in the Turkification of the region (Aydıngün & Aydıngün, 2015: 77 - 86).

In 1118, Georgian King David invited 45,000 families of Kipchaks to Georgia, and Kipchaks accepted this invitation and began to settle in Georgia, so Christianity began to spread rapidly among Kipchaks (Aydıngün & Aydıngün, 2015: 77 - 86). In fact, the Georgian King invited Kipchaks to his country because he did not have a strong army to fight against the Seljuks and Iranians, and Tbilisi was successfully taken back thanks to the Kipchaks' strong army. Since Atabek and Georgians have the same religious beliefs, Kipchak dominance over Georgians has increased over time and Kipchaks have become very strong and declared their independence. Atabeks established close relations with the Ottoman Empire and continued these good relations by providing flour and nutritional support during the War of Çaldıran. Kıpçaklar decided to establish its own government after rejecting the Georgian administration and Atabek Domination started in this region, which will continue for 310 years.

Sultan Alparslan organized many conquests in Ahıska Region and at the end of these conquests, Ahıska region came under Seljuk rule in 1068 (Devrisheva 2019: 1170 - 1186). The Ahıska Region was captured during the first Islamic conquests, but later it was dominated by the Safavids. The Safavids made heavy insults against the Islamic religion and prophets, so the Ottoman Empire organized campaigns on Safavids.

The Amasya Agreement has led to the end of the wars between the Safavids and the Ottoman Empire (Aydıngün & Aydıngün, 2015: 77 - 86). Thanks to the internal turmoil that emerged in the Safavid State, the Ottoman State easily conquered the region by taking advantage of the opportunity. The Ottoman State, which won the Çıldır war, took the Ahıska Region under its auspices and Çıldır Province continued to exist as the center of the Ottoman State for 250 years.

The Ottoman Empire first applied the settlement policy in the lands it conquered and thus managed to be permanent in the region. At the same time, the main purpose of the Ottoman State is accelerating the Islamization and Turkification of the region.

On the other hand, mosques, madrasahs and caravansaries were built in the Ahıska region by the Ottoman state. Thanks to the help of the Ottoman State, the Ahıska region completed its development and managed to become a trade center. Ahıska region has had a strategic importance for the Ottoman state throughout history because Ahıska region is seen as the primary way to reach Central Asia. Ahıska region, which is an indivisible part and heart of the Ottoman State for 250 years, had to leave the Ottoman Empire after the Russian occupation. The city of Ahıska, captured by the Russian forces in 1828, was shaken deeply. After the Edirne agreement was signed between the Ottomans and the Russians, the Ahıska region was given to the

Russians as war compensation (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). After the Ahıska Turks entered under Russian captivity, their lives started with fear and persecution. Although Ahıska Region came under Russian domination, it continued its loyalty to the Ottoman State under all circumstances. The city of Ahıska has always existed as a Turkish hostel from the past to the present. After the Ahıska region came under Russian domination, the verses of the Poet Gülali became the cry of the Ahıska Turks (Devrisheva, 2006: 17-96).

Since the past, the greatest desire of the Russians is to go to the warm seas. The roads leading to the warm seas were passing through the Ottoman lands, so the Russians had to conquer the Ahıska region first to conquer Anatolia. At the same time, Ahıska Region is the shortest way to reach the Caucasus. It has become more important for the Russians than the colonies in the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Far East (Zeyrek, 2001: 15 - 175). That is why the region of Ahıska has been occupied many times by the Russians. The human population in the region was mixed and they did not have a common language, so political unity and solidarity could not be established in the region. The Russians took advantage of this opportunity and started to organize attacks on the Caucasus.

Çıldır Province is known as the heart of the Ottoman State and its strategic importance is very important. As a result of the increasing Russian occupations, the Ottoman State lost Çıldır. With the loss of Çıldır, the Russian domination in the region started to progress slowly and the Russians started to spread to the inner parts of Asia, but there were great reactions against this spread in the Caucasian Region. The Russians wanted to occupy the Ottoman border after capturing the North and South Caucasus regions. During the Ottoman-Russian wars, the Ahıska Turks, who showed a strong defense and heroism, supported the Ottoman State and defended their homeland from all sides, but despite this high level of defense, the Ahıska region came under the domination of the Russians and after that date, the Ahıska Turks were subjected to torture and persecution.

After the Edirne Agreement was signed, the Ahıska region was left to Russia as war compensation and the Armenian population was placed in the region by the Russians (Öner N. Ş., 2019: 53-73). After the population of Armenian origin settled in the region, the demographic structure of Ahıska Region started to deteriorate. As the Ottoman-Russian wars continued, massacres against Turks increased in the region and Muslim Turks who were subjected to violence by the Russians had to leave their homeland.

The main purpose of the Russians is to Christianize the region and to ensure that the Ahıska Turks migrate from the region. The Russians finally achieved their ambitions. Ahıska Turks, who fled Russian oppression and persecution, started forced migrations to Anatolian lands. Most of the migrations in this period were directed to the provinces close to the Ottoman lands.

Ahıska Turks applied to join the Ottoman Empire by taking advantage of the “auto determination” right (Alım, Doğanay, & Şimşek, 2016: 304 - 313). Ahıska Turks have been subjected to the most severe oppression and persecution because they are both Muslim and Turkish. Meskhetian region Batum Agreement with previously fell under the domination of Turkey, but later in the Armistice Agreement was signed lost again. Georgians had a say again on the lands because the Turks had to leave the region. Most of the intellectuals and leaders living in Ahıska region were sentenced to exile and death (Erten, 2014: 41 - 70). Primarily Meskhetian Turks were cut all ties with Turkey, including cultural and spiritual then been translated into Georgian surnames. Thus, the assimilation studies on the region started to accelerate.

2. THE COMPULSORY EXILE OF THE AHISKA TURKS

Increased pressure, persecution and discriminatory movements continued during the Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Georgia period, and tension in the Soviet Union was at its peak. Despite all these pressures, the Ahıska Turks continued their struggle for life in the region. Especially in the Soviet period, the use of the Turkish name was tried to be eliminated. Azeri passports were given to the Ahıska Turks to make them forget their identities and national selves, and most Ahıska Turks were reflected as Azeri in the Turkish

population. All kinds of oppression and persecution have been made to make Ahıska Turks forget their homeland.

In the period when the Second World War started to fire, the male population of the Ahıska Turks were sent to the army to fight against the Germans (Akıř & Seferov, 2008: 393-411). The population in the region was employed on the Ahıska-Borcam railway under heavy conditions and lost their lives there. In fact, this worse will take them off their homes because Ahıska Turks will be exiled by this railroad. After the war ended, our heroes who returned to their homeland no longer had their homeland and a family they left behind.

Meskhethian region where adjacent to the border with Turkey and the Turkish nation was awakened to the danger always recognized as an unreliable people by the Stalin. The main fear of Stalin is the possibility of Germans and Turks to enter the war together and does not want a possible Turkish-German alliance (Bařnuh, 2008: 1-13). Russian Government, if the Turkish-Soviet war occurred in the region of Meskhethian Turks to Turkey he thought would help. Stalin decided to exile because he thought that the Ahıska Turks would betray the Soviet Union.

Other peoples exiled by the Soviet Union have been declared exiled because they cooperate with the Germans, but there is no valid reason for the exile of the Ahıska Turks. The Soviet leaders even reported that the exile was to ensure life safety and that they could return to their homeland when the danger disappeared (Aydıngün & Aydıngün, 2015: 77 - 86). The truth is that; During the exile, the German threat disappeared from the region, and the Ahıska region was never conquered by the Germans throughout history (Aydıngün & Aydıngün, 2015: 77 - 86). On the other hand, the persecution they made by using the name of evacuation instead of the name of exile is reflected in good faith. In fact, one of the treacherous ambitions of the Soviets on this region is to clear the region from the existence of the Turkish Nation and from there to descend into the warm seas.

The exile, the beginning of great bondage and the black spot of humanity, occurred on November 14, 1944, by the order of Stalin. Stalin was the cruel name that ordered this exile, and from the moment the exile began, the struggle for separation from the homeland began in masses. Regardless of the cold winter season, all villages and towns were attacked by the soldiers. Then Stalin's decision was read in four places and an order was made to leave their home. Allah, Allah, cries, shouts, cries and bellow voices show the brutality of the road to the unknown. In a short period of time, all the Ahıska Turks were filled into animal wagons and the journey to Central Asia began for them. Moreover, this death came from the railroad that they made with their own hands. Many people lost their lives at the end of this complicated journey, which lasted about 2 months in open, thirsty and ice-cold wagons. Most of the dead were hidden because they were thrown out of the wagons by the soldiers.

In fact, Stalin reported that this exile was made for the purpose of protecting his own life safety, but the truth was very different. The exile plan prepared by Beriya was realized by the order of Stalin. Ahıska Turks were left to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan at the end of this exile journey (Öner, 2019: 53-73). With the departure of Ahıska Turks from the region, houses and towns remained empty. For this reason, Georgian and Armenian populations were placed in the region. With the Georgian population placed after the Ahıska Turks, the region became Christian in a short time. The Ahıska Turks, on the other hand, were met with great prejudice and fear by the locals in the regions they visited because the wrong information was given about the Ahıska Turks (Öner, 2019: 53-73). Ahıska Turks were sentenced to live a camp life under strict control so that they could not escape from the areas they migrated to, and no identity documents were given during this martial law (Faigov, 2015: 22-70). During this time, the Ahıska Turks did not compromise on their own and protected their national selves, and their desire to return to the homeland became stronger. With the death of Stalin, some restrictions on Ahıska Turks were removed and some rights were granted. For example: Ahıska Turks started to study in Russian schools. At the same time, martial law applied to Ahıska

Turks in 1956 was eliminated, but Ahıska Turks could not return to their homeland. As the Ahıska Turks were forbidden to return to their homeland, they started to immigrate to places close to Ahıska Region.

In fact, from the first day of exile, Ahıska Turks were always in a struggle to return to their own land. During this period, migrations were mostly made for Azerbaijan because it was easier to go to the homeland from here. Ahıska Turks organized ten congresses up to the events of Fergana and the main purpose of these congresses is to create the fighting spirit necessary to return to their homeland. With Garbaçov's coming to power, the hopes of the Ahıska Turks to return to their homeland have been revived, but during this time, the events of the Fergana have emerged, and the exile has been faced for the second time.

Ahıska Turks lived in peace and harmony within the borders of Uzbekistan until the Fergana Incidents occurred, however, with the onset of the Fergana incidents, the Ahıska Turks were once again exiled and subjected to forced migration by Uzbekistan. An event in the market has grown to the threshold of exile (Alım, Doğanay, & Şimşek, 2016: 304 - 313). The tension between Uzbek and Ahıska youth, which started on the grounds of cheating during bargaining, was prevented from growing. However, the discussions between the Ahıska Turks and the Uzbeks have never ended and subsequently turned into bloody attacks. The cause of the Fergana events is known as ethnic hatred, intense unemployment and religious rumors among youth (Kolukırık, 2011: 167 - 181).

In fact, all these ethnic conflicts are a game of the Soviet Union. With its division and management strategy, its focused attention differently and managed to provoke Uzbekistan. Thus, violent clashes took place between Ahıska Turks and Uzbekistan, the land that carries the same blood. The Soviet Union managed to make two societies enemies, and eventually bloodshed. Red flags were hung in their homes by giving excessive amounts of drugs and alcohol to young people from Ahıska (Devrisheva K., 2019: 1170 - 1186). Their aim was to distinguish the houses of Ahıska Turks and burn them. All the houses were looted by prisoners released from prison and the Uzbek people. As a result of the increasing bloody clashes, Fergana Valley has been the tomb of thousands of Ahıska Turks.

Another reason was that Uzbeks started to be unemployed because of Ahıska Turks because Ahıska Turks have a richer economy causes the Uzbeks to provoke (Kolukırık, 2011: 167-181). For these reasons, the attacks against Ahıska Turks have reached the line stage. After these events, Ahıska Turks were excluded by the entire population of Uzbekistan and were declared as undesirable people. The events in the Fergana valley spread in a short time and the Ahıska Turks were subjected to violence, oppression and torture. After many bloody events, Ahıska Turks had to migrate, leaving their 45 years of persecution in the Fergana valley.

Before the Fergana events emerged, the struggle of the Ahıska Turks to return to the homeland was progressing, but after these events, the Ahıska Turks had to migrate to different regions and their national struggles were weakened. Ahıska Turks found the cure to take refuge in Soviet soldiers (Akış & Seferov, 2008: 393-411). Ahıska Turks are in search of homeland again and started to immigrate to Azerbaijan, which embraced them. The other part of the immigration was directed towards Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (Akış & Seferov, 2008: 393-411). The 1944 exile and 1989 exile for Ahıska Turks were made only because they were Turkish. The Ahıska Turks have never disrupted their unity and solidarity since the first day they were exiled from their homeland and have always continued their struggle to return to their homeland. The problem of returning to the homeland that started in the period of the Soviet Union continues today.

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the death of Stalin, Georgia became an independent state. However, since the Georgians did not want the revival of the Turkish presence in the region, they did not allow the Ahıska Turks to return to Georgia. In particular, the Armenian population did not want the Ahıska Turks to return and showed great reactions to it (Akış & Seferov, 2008: 393-411). It became impossible to

return to the region as a Turk. They would either accept the Georgian identity and the Christian religion, or they would not be admitted to the region. Ahıska Turks never compromised their national identity. Another reason why the Ahıska Turks are not accepted into the homeland has been shown as the inadequate economy, but in such a case the Council of Europe has announced that it will provide the necessary economic support (Akıř & Seferov, 2008: 393-411). At this stage, international organizations should provide the necessary financial support in order to prevent Georgia from making excuses for economic problems. Georgia was admitted to the Council of Europe because it declared that the Ahıska Turks would take steps to return to their homeland, but Georgia did not maintain the same stability, although it initially accepted this requirement (Akıř & Seferov, 2008: 393-411).

The first light of hope for Ahıska Turks was the beginning of the membership of the Council of Europe. In fact, when we look at 2007, Georgia has confirmed the return of thousands of Ahıska Turks on the homeland, but it has deterred most of them by returning various difficulties and obstacles. Despite the decisions of the Council of Europe, the issue of returning to the homeland has remained unsolvable since Georgia acted unstable and reluctant.

Georgia already has territorial integrity problems with South Ossetia on the one hand and Abkhazia on the other (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). Therefore, with the return of the Ahıska Turks, the territorial integrity will be compromised. Therefore, Georgia did not want the existing problems to be exacerbated anymore and it has managed to prevent the return of Ahıska Turks by revealing various difficulties. If the Ahıska Turks want to return to their homeland, they must come under the citizenship of their country of origin. Moreover, they are not subject to relocation to Ahıska Region and they would be distributed equally throughout Georgia. Ahıska Turks could not act boldly against all these conditions and lost their desire to return home. A Georgian assimilation was tried to be done secretly, but the Ahıska Turks did not tolerate this. At first, other states, including Turkey, should insist on the return of Meskhetian Turks to Georgia.

2.1. Ahıska Turks Around Turkey Migration Process

Ahıska Turks have been subjected to minority treatment throughout history because they are both Muslims and Turks. The only Turkish community that did not have its own state administration was Ahıska Turks. Ahıska Turks managed not to be assimilated because they had a closed family life. It was very important for Turkey because the Meskhetian region was passing through all the roads from Akhaltsikhe extending to Central Asia. Ahıska Turks immigrated to Turkey first began in 1829 and continues until today, this migration as compulsory and free. In particular, the period of exile, fighting the Russian troops were able to escape the Meskhetian Turks from some of Turkey's borders. The first migrations to Turkey occurred in those years. After the Fergana events began an intense wave of immigration from Uzbekistan to Turkey. Unlike other states, Turkey has provided support to migration to its territory and has maintained a successful integration process.

There are no serious differences between Turkey and the Meskhetian Turks have been so easily complete the process of integration. Although Ahıska Turks were subjected to various pressures during the Soviet period, they never compromised their religion and nation. Their loyalty to Turkey has always continued. Ahıska Turks have embraced Turkey as their homeland after their homeland. Ahıska Turks were found in the continuous application to emigrate to Turkey. In line with these applications, negotiations started between Ahıska Turks and the Soviet Union, but the negotiations ended unsuccessfully as there were immigration problems with Bulgaria at that time (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86).

Turgut Ozal period with immigration requests in Turkey has come up again and the first steps have been taken in accordance with the instructions (Devrisheva, 2019: 333 - 352). As a result of the decision published in the Official Journal of the Meskhetian Turks began their exodus to Turkey. a certain number each year has

been reported in Turkey will be accepted in the human population. Ahıska Turks, who struggle to survive under difficult conditions, are given priority in the migration stage (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). On top of that intense migratory movements towards Ahıska began to Turkey from the regions inhabited by Ahıska Turks. The migrations initially made within the scope of the resettlement policy started to return to free migrations. Only 150 families were placed in Turkey within the scope of Settlement immigration and citizenship has been given to these families very soon (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). Other immigrant families continued to arrive in Turkey is free. Migration Settlement scope of Meskhetian Turks to Turkey placed to help, but there has been considerable Turkey Meskhetian Turks who settled in the scope of free migration assistance could be made the same. Since Ahıska Turks are in our country, they are the group with the most extensive rights and freedoms. Most countries are against dual citizenship. Even Georgia under the pretext that the Meskhetian Turks had removed obstacles to return home but Turkey has approached it adopted country of moderate and Meskhetian Turks. Most of these migrations were made by Ahıska Turks who settled in Azerbaijan after the Fergana events (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86).

This year Turkey was dealing with the problem in the fight against terrorism on the one hand the one hand the economic crisis. Thus, it was canceled on migration which will be held in Turkey. Contrary to decisions, immigration by the Turks from Ahıska continues despite being illegal. Therefore, Ahıska citizenship and residency rights for Turkey's permission has presented several opportunities for Turkey. In order to obtain Turkish citizenship for 5 years it has emerged obligation to reside in Turkey (Ganiyeva, 2012: 176-188). On the other hand, an Ahıska Turk who wants to gain citizenship by marriage must stay married for at least 3 years (Mekengeç, 2014: 160-179). Meskhetian Turks who do not have Turkish citizenship in the territory of Turkey "is located in the Turkish Foreign Noble" class (Mekengeç, 2014: 160-179). Considering the working conditions, privileges were provided to Ahıska Turks. However, although Turkey provided much convenience by citizenship, residence and work permit issues have not been resolved.

Especially after 2003, conditions became more difficult for Ahıska Turks. Until 2003 work permit and residence permit were issued at the same time, but after 2003 only residence permit began to be issued (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). Ahıska people who do not have a work permit are forced to work under low wages and conditions. Turkey has always been a homeland for them. Due to Turkey's political and economic stability in Turkey it was more demand begins to increase, and a second migration has also come from Ukraine to Turkey.

2.2.Ahıska Turks Around Krasnodar Migration Process

As explained in other chapters, the Ahıska Turks who were exiled from the Ahıska region on the orders of Stalin in 1944 had to migrate to many regions, especially Uzbekistan, and continued their struggle in these regions. Since most of the Ahıska Turks have been changed their nationality and names in exile, a clear population number cannot be determined. Ahıska Turks and Uzbeks lived in peace and tranquility before the Fergana events started. Therefore, the Ahıska Turks experienced great fear and surprise with the start of the Fergana events. As a result of these bloody attacks between two Turkish communities with the same blood, the people of Ahıska found the cure to other countries.

Ahıska people, who had to leave Uzbekistan, started to migrate to the villages of Russia. It was planned by the Russians to migrate to different regions in groups, but the Ahıska Turks did not allow this because their ties could be cut off as a result of this separation. The As explained in other chapters, the Ahıska Turks who were exiled from the Ahıska region on the orders of Stalin in 1944 had to migrate to many regions, especially Uzbekistan, and continued their struggle in these regions. Since most of the Ahıska Turks have been changed their nationality and names in exile, a clear population number cannot be determined. Ahıska Turks and Uzbeks lived in peace and tranquility before the Fergana events started. Therefore, the Ahıska Turks experienced great fear and surprise with the start of the Fergana events. As a result of these bloody attacks between two Turkish communities with the same blood, the people of Ahıska found the cure to other

countries. Ahıska people, who had to leave Uzbekistan, started to migrate to the villages of Russia. It was planned by the Russians to migrate to different regions in groups, but the Ahıska Turks did not allow this because their ties could be cut off as a result of this separation. The Turks extending to America has started. Ahıska Turks had to migrate once again because they could not return to their homeland and it is unknown that they will not be exposed to a new exile in the future.

Ahıska Turks have been exposed to discriminatory policies and pressures in most of the regions they migrated to. After the exile of 1944, the return of Ahıska Turks to their homeland did not happen again. They have been subjected to violent attacks and discrimination by the locals in their regions.

Especially in the Krasnodar Territory, all the rights and freedoms of Ahıska Turks were taken away and the people continued to live under threat. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the article "No one can be arbitrarily captured and exiled" (Agezova, 2017: 264 - 270). According to this rule, people have freedom of liberty and freedom of residence, but the fundamental rights and freedoms of Ahıska Turks have been repeatedly violated. The situation becomes even more unsolvable as the United Nations maintains its silence in the face of this inhuman persecution suffered by Ahıska Turks (Agezova, 2017: 264 - 270). Despite all the struggles of Ahıska Turks to return to their own land, International Organizations do not show a positive approach in this regard. The first step for Ahıska Turks to return to Georgia was taken by the Council of Europe, but it was not concluded due to Georgia's unstable behavior. It has created many obstacles to prevent Georgia's Ahıska Turks from returning. The most important obstacle is the lack of dual citizenship. Ahıska Turks had to leave citizenship of other countries. Most of the Ahıska Turks gave up returning to their lands because of the exiles they experienced and because they did not trust the Georgian Government because there is no guarantee that they will not live a new exile. Georgia migrated to the remote regions from their homeland to disrupt the unity and solidarity of the Ahıska Turks (Agezova, 2017: 264 - 270). According to Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the expression "Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own country, and return to his country" (Agezova, 2017: 264 - 270). According to this rule, people have the right and freedom to immigrate, but this legal right of Ahıska Turks is violated, and a rule violation is made. Georgia does not allow the Ahıska Turks to return as Turks. They would either be Georgian or not accepted into the homeland. This condition of Georgia goes against the principle of equality. Georgian Prime Minister Giorgi Kvirikashvili used the word Turkish for the first time for Ahıska Turks and this is a very important development in the international public (Agezova, 2017: 264 - 270). Today, the Ahıska Turks are living under the patronage of other countries as a stateless society. Therefore, most of them are deprived of rights and freedom. Unless the United Nations and International Organizations take a step towards Ahıska Turks, the ordeal of Ahıska Turks will continue.

2.3. Ahıska Turks Around America Migration Process

Ahıska Turks had to migrate because they were stateless. Ahıska Turks, who were exiled from their homeland in 1944, could not return to their homeland again. Since the Ahıska Turks could not return to their homeland, they migrated to different geographies. These include Uzbekistan, Russia, the United States and Turkey. The Fergana Incidents and Ahıska Turks were exiled for the second time and had to migrate to the inner parts of Russia. Ahıska Turks have always been a community that is not wanted by the Russians. Especially the Ahıska Turks who immigrated to the Krasnodar region tried to survive under the harshest conditions. Ahıska Turks had to have a residence permit since the Soviet Union came to the region before it broke up, but Russia did not grant a residence permit (Poyraz & GÜLER, 2019: 187-216). That is why Ahıska Turks continue to exist as a stateless community. Basic human rights of Ahıska Turks were confiscated. Since they do not have any identity or passport, they do not have the right to education, to work and to travel. Especially because of the racist and aggressive behavior of the people of the region, Ahıska Turks were exposed to discrimination. As the day goes by, the situation in Krasnodar has become even more deplorable. Ahıska Turks had to live an illegal life (Devrisheva K., 2019: 1170 - 1186). Inhuman treatment of Ahıska Turks has been put on the agenda by International Public Opinion. America did not remain silent

anymore and embraced Ahıska Turks. A compromise was reached with Russia in order to immigrate Ahıska Turks to America (Şahin, 2014: 18 - 95). Ahıska Turks joined the American population under the name of refugees. All the needs of Ahıska Turks have been met by America. In fact, immigration to America is an example of forced migration because Ahıska Turks who escaped from the pressure in Krasnodar found redemption in America. Towards the end of 2004, mass movements of immigrants began. To date, around 10,000 Ahıska Turks have immigrated to America and have been settled in states such as Texas, Pennsylvania and Florida (Akış & Seferov, 2008: 393-411). Ahıska Turks living in America started to learn English in a short time to adapt and find a job in a short time. The worker deficit in America was very high and Ahıska Turks are known for their hard work. Ahıska Turks closed the workers deficit in America in a short time and successfully completed the adaptation process. Ahıska Turks are named as “American Meskhetian Turk” in American Laws (Poyraz & Güler, 2019: 187-216). Ahıska Turks settled in every region, not only around a certain region. America, which has been researching Ahıska Turks for a long time, has provided the acceptance of Ahıska Turks as a result of these studies. Ahıska Turks never went against the state administration and easily adapted to the regions they migrated to. After the September 11 attacks, America did not see the Ahıska Turks as a dangerous people and accepted them as refugees (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). All needs of Ahıska Turks, primarily health, were met. Health screenings were made free of charge and those with health problems were examined. In the face of these aids, no fees were requested from the Turks from Ahıska. America wanted to prevent Ahıska Turks from becoming stateless (Kurt & Açıkgöz, 2017: 107 - 127). Aid by America to Ahıska Turks reveals the importance it attaches to human rights. In fact, the interests of America increase the support for Ahıska Turks. America will have the right to participate in the developments in the South Caucasus as it gives the immigration right to Ahıska Turks (Kurt & Açıkgöz, 2017: 107 - 127). If the Ahıska Turks managed to return to Georgia, America could claim rights on the region. Therefore, he always wanted to keep the Ahıska Turks close to him. Ahıska Turks have learned to struggle and work under all conditions due to their difficulties. They worked in low-income jobs until they learned English. After the discrimination and restrictions in the Krasnodar region, the rights and liberties granted in America have been a glimmer of hope for Ahıska Turks. At first, Ahıska Turks experienced fear due to this behavior of America and thought that they would be exposed to new human rights violations. For this reason, they have abstained from the migration process, but after a while they were very satisfied with the hosting of America. America made a strategic move with this settlement policy. In fact, America has claimed the Armenian population, not the Ahıska Turks on the Ahıska Region, because the return of the Ahıska Turks to the homeland will disturb the Armenian population the most (Sargin, 2006: 11 - 85). Therefore, America has allowed Ahıska Turks to migrate to the country for the welfare of Armenians. As a result of immigration to America, the probability of Ahıska Turks to return to their own lands has been slightly weakened. Ahıska Turks managed to preserve their identity thanks to their strong family ties and were not assimilated (Hasanoğlu, 2016: 192 - 200).

3. ATTACKS ON TURKS OF AHISKA AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Ahıska Turks had to migrate to different geographies, especially Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, after their great exile in 1944. At the same time, 1944 is the date when the return doors of Ahıska Turks to the country were completely closed. In line with the order of Stalin, all the Turks from Ahıska were filled into animal vaguest and exiled. The Ahıska Turks who were sent into exile were told that they would return after the German threat left the region, but there is no such threat (Aydingün & Aydingün, 2015: 77 - 86). The aim of the Russians is to eliminate the Turkish presence in the region. Most of the Ahıska Turks died during exile because they traveled under harsh conditions. The Turks from Ahıska, who managed to survive, were settled in new countries. 15,000 Ahıska Turks migrated to Kyrgyzstan (Faigov, 2015: 22-75). The immigration of Ahıska Turks to Kyrgyzstan continued its mobility in the following years. Especially the Turks from Ahıska, who had to migrate for the second time after the Fergana events, left the territory of Uzbekistan and settled in Kyrgyzstan. According to the data obtained from the last census, 51,750 Ahıskans are alive in Kyrgyzstan

(Guseynova, 2008: 94-118). Kyrgyzstan was added to the life of Ahıska Turks full of exiles. Turkey's President Abdullah Gül has also visited Kyrgyzstan and received official response by the Government to visit the locals. Abdulla GÜL gave moderate speeches to the Ahıska Turks on their return to their homeland and provided moral support. Abdullah GÜL personally held meetings with Ahıska Turks in Bishkek (Faigov, 2015: 22-75). Internal turmoil has occurred in Kyrgyzstan for political reasons. The events that started with the revolutionary movements have grown and created an impact throughout the country. The conflicts were also effective in Maveyka village where Ahıska Turks lived and carried out attacks on Ahıska Turks. Great damage was done to the fields and crops of Ahıska Turks by the revolutionaries (Faigov, 2015: 22-75). Crops that are the source of livelihood of Ahıska Turks were destroyed. The group, who could not get his anger, set the houses and cars of Ahıska Turks on fire. As a result of these attacks, Ahıska Turks had to leave their villages. In the events in the Fergana valley and in Maveyka Village, the fact that the attackers were alcoholic showed similarity (Faigov, 2015: 22-75). Torture and persecution of Ahıska Turks increased their severity, so it was difficult to control the events. As a result of these attacks, Ahıska Turks had to leave the territory of Kyrgyzstan.

After the Fergana Events, the Ahıska Turks had to leave Uzbekistan and migrated to different geographies. One of the countries they immigrated was Ukraine. Ahıska Turks have settled in the southern and southeastern parts of Ukraine (Akpınar, 2016: 327 - 343). Ahıska Turks have surrounded the Donetsk region, which has rich coal deposits, and they continue their lives in this region. The city of Donetzz is a new residential area established under the iron and steel industry (Akpınar, 2016: 327 - 343). Most of the immigration of Ahıska Turks to Ukraine occurred after the Fergana Incidents. Since Ukraine is a secluded and conflict-free country, Ahıska Turks wanted to immigrate to this region. Ahıska Turks make a living with agriculture and animal husbandry in Ukraine as in other countries. Ahıska Turks have never had any ethnic problems or conflicts with the locals (Aydingün İ., 2016: 13 - 46). Contrary to the problems experienced in other countries, Ahıska Turks have established good relations with the local people in Ukraine. At the same time, Ahıska Turks were never excluded by the locals and did not undergo discriminatory movements. Ahıska Turks living in Ukraine live in Kiev, Donetsk, Kharkov cities and surrounding centers (Seferov & Akış, 2008: 393-411).

In 2014, after Russia annexed Crimea, armed clashes were launched in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions by separatist Russians (Akpınar, 2016: 327 - 343). The clashes between the separatist Russian organizations and Ukraine have strengthened and started to threaten Ahıska Turks. The war between Russia and Ukraine caused serious damage to the places where Ahıska Turks lived. Despite being exiled by other countries, Ahıska Turks emigrated from Ukraine with their own consent. Ahıska Turks, who were caught in the middle of the two fires, left Ukraine to protect their lives. At the request of Homeland Society of Ahıska Turks it has been decided to accept Turkey (Akpınar, 2016: 327 - 343). Ahıska Turks resettlement context of migration has been provided acceptance of Turkey. Ahıska Turks were first settled in Erzincan. Ahıska Turks, who lived under the most difficult conditions, were given priority. Turkey has always been a second home for Ahıska Turks. The state uses all its facilities for Turks from Ahıska. Financial support is provided by the state for the home and livelihood needs of Ahıska Turks. Migration of Ahıska Turks to Üzümlü continues today. Despite all these migrations, kinship ties have never been broken thanks to the strong feelings of national unity and togetherness of Ahıska Turks. Moreover, they have managed to preserve their Turkish identity in every region they visit.

CONCLUSION: THE CURRENT SITUATION OF AHISKA TURKS

Ahıska Turks were exiled from Georgian lands in 1944 and could not return to these lands again. Ahıska Turks never lost their hope of returning to their homeland one day. Since Ahıska Turks could not return to their home country, they had to migrate to different geographies of the world. They were mostly excluded in the geographies they migrated to and were exposed to

discrimination. Krasnodar, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan have been disappointing for Ahıska Turks. Bloody attacks have been carried out on Ahıska Turks and human rights violations have reached the line stage. Today, Ahıska Turks are known as a stateless community. Meskhetian Turks, first aid came from Turkey, but has not been enough. The United Nations Commissioner for Refugees also noticed the desperation of Ahıska Turks (Seferov & Akıř, 2008: 393-411). Ahıska Turks, with a population of around 600,000 today, live in about 15 countries in the world and nearly a hundred regions (Seferov & Akıř, 2008: 393-411). The Soviet Union wanted the Ahıska Turks to disperse and the Turkish Union to break down, therefore Soviet Union exiled the Ahıska Turks to remote areas. Most importantly, despite all the distances Meskhetian Turks from throughout history it has always managed to maintain his loyalty to Turkey. Ahıska Turks emigrated most countries including Turkey, Kazakhstan, Russia, Azerbaijan and Kyrgyzstan. (Seferov & Akıř, 2008: 393-411).

All in all, Ahıska Turks exiled from their own lands because they were against the interests of the Soviet Union. There is no justification for exile of Ahıska Turks. The Soviet Union had to hold the Ahıska Region to reach the Caucasus and the warm seas. At the same time, Ahıska Turks and Turkey border were neighbors. So, the Soviet Union felt threatened. Stalin ordered the exile because he did not want the Turkish Union and people of Turkish origin in the region. Stalin is the killer who ordered this brutal exile. The year 1944 is a shame in the name of the Turkish World and humanity. It is known as Hitler, the most brutal and cruel leader ever, but Stalin's cruelty to Ahıska Turks is at least as painless as Hitler. Ahıska Turks were filled into animal vaguest and sent towards the journey of death. The main purpose of the Russians is to carry out their Christianization and Georgian policies. Therefore, Georgian and Armenian populations were placed in the abandoned lands. Ahıska Turks could not return to Ahıska land after this exile. They immigrated to areas close to their own lands, but in these regions, they lived a life under fear and oppression. The Fergana Incidents and the Ahıska Turks were betrayed by Uzbekistan, which has blood ties. With the Fergana Events, the Turks from Ahıska have been subjected to bloody attacks and had to migrate from the Fergana region. Ahıska Turks took refuge in Russia as a last resort. Russia has been against the Turkish presence and unity throughout history. Therefore, he did not want a Turkish structuring in the region. An exile life full of torture has begun for Ahıska Turks who immigrated to the Krasnodar Territory. The Krasnodar region was the place where the worst treatments were made to the Ahıska Turks. Ahıska Turks were not given a residence permit, racist attacks and discriminations were made. The most serious human rights violations occurred in the Krasnodar region. Ahıska Turks fleeing heavy pressure from Turkey and forced to migrate to America remained. Republic of Turkey is the second homeland for Ahıska Turks. Despite all assimilation policies, Ahıska Turks have managed to preserve their national identity and religious beliefs. Ahıska Turks are known for their loyalty to Turkey and always has never sever their ties with Turkey. Ahıska Turks, who migrated to Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine after their exile, also faced similar attacks. Especially in Kyrgyzstan, bloody attacks were carried out on Ahıska Turks. So, they had to leave the area. Contrary to the violent clashes in other countries, Ahıska Turks had no problems in Ukraine, but Ahıska Turks had to leave the region because the separatist movements in Ukraine also spread to Maveyka village. Ahıska Turks are called a stateless people today. If Georgia does not take a moderate approach, the Ahıska Turks cannot find a solution. The problem of the return of Ahıska Turks to Georgia should be conveyed to the public by other countries and stable steps

should be taken. Meskhetian Turks and Turkey must be in unity and solidarity. Turkey must take decisive action on the issue of Ahiska Turks and Ahiska Turks should be with the public. Although Ahiska Species are far from their homeland, they have always owned the Turkishness bond. The only solution for Ahiska Turks is to return to their lands.

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