



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE CIRCASSIAN GENOCIDE IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS



**Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Constitution Hall
Vilnius, Lithuania
17 December 2025**



LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS
SEIMAS

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE CIRCASSIAN GENOCIDE IN THE CONTEXT OF HISTORY AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS

Conference Mission Statement: Advancing Historical Truth, Recognition, and Justice for the Circassian Genocide

The International Conference “The Circassian Genocide in the Context of History and Contemporary Politics” brings together scholars, policymakers, and advocates to confront one of the most systematically silenced tragedies of the modern era — the Circassian Genocide of 1763–1864.

Held in Vilnius, a city whose own history embodies resilience, memory, and the struggle for freedom, the conference provides a platform for rigorous historical examination, legal analysis, and principled dialogue on human rights and collective justice.

By convening historians, legal experts, civil society representatives, and activists from the Black Sea, Caucasus, and Baltic regions — as well as the global Circassian diaspora — this gathering illuminates the enduring political, cultural, and demographic consequences of the genocide. It seeks to move beyond remembrance by advancing concrete pathways toward recognition, accountability, and the preservation of Circassian identity, language, and cultural heritage.

Grounded in historical evidence and human rights principles, this conference aims to transform remembrance into action, strengthening the global movement for justice, identity preservation, and the restoration of Circassia’s rightful place in world history and its future.



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CONFERENCE PROGRAM

09:00 – 09:30

PRES BRIEFING

10:00 – 10:15

Opening and Welcoming Remarks by the Organizers

Mr. Laurynas Šedvydis

Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Chairman of the Seimas Human Rights Committee

Mr. Kase Kik, Council of United Circassia (Ms. Diana Kutateladze)

Prof. Dr. Adas Jakubauskas

Dr. Orhan Barsiq, Council of United Circassia

10:15 – 11:15

Panel I - Historical Background And Documentation

This panel provides a comprehensive historical foundation for understanding the Circassian Genocide, tracing the Russian Empire's expansionist policies, mass deportations, and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe of 1864. Through scholarly analysis and historical documentation, the discussion aims to establish an accurate record of events and underscore their lasting impact on Circassian identity and displacement.



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Moderator Dr. Orhan Barsiq

Mr. Adel Bashqawi (Live Online)

Circassian Activist & Author

Mr. Ali Berzeg

International Circassian Council (ICC) — Circassians and Circassia: Past, Present, and Future

Prof. Dr. Nurgün Koç

The Russian Empire's Policy in the Caucasus: Expansion, Deportation, and Ethnic Cleansing

Prof. Dr. Walter Richmond (Video message)

Historian, Author of "The Circassian Genocide (2013)" & "The Northwest Caucasus: Past, Present, Future (2008)"

Dr. Sarah Slye

The Circassian Genocide and the Struggle for Identity in the Contemporary Caucasus

Dr. Nusret Baş

Chairman of the Circassian Associations Federation (Ms. Didem Baş)

Dr. Hüseyin Oylupinar

Global and Regional Power Balance and the Future Possibilities of Circassia

Dr. Orhan Barsiq

The Historical Framework of the Circassian Genocide: The Caucasian–Russian Wars (1763–1864)

11:15 – 12:00

Panel II - Shared Histories of Exile and Survival: Parallel Trajectories

This panel explores parallels between the Circassian experience and the trajectories of other nations subjected to occupation, forced displacement, and attempts at cultural erasure. By comparing these intertwined histories, the session underscores common patterns of resilience and the importance of collective memory in shaping national survival.



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Moderator Dr. Yusuf Bahadir Keskin

Mr. Marius Kundrotas

The issue of the Circassian genocide in the context of historical experience and today's geopolitics

Ms. Aida Eyvazova (Live Online)

Azerbaijan: Sovereignty, Memory Politics, and International Partnerships

Mr. Oleg Magaletsky

Free Nations Post Russia Forum

Dr. Nedim Useinov

University of Warsaw

Ms. Aida Abdrakhmanova

Head of the Tatarstan Independence Committee "Our security begins where Russian imperialism and revanchism end"

Prof. Dr. Merab Chukhua

Head of Institute of Caucasiology, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University

Mr. Chamil Albakov

Honorary Consul of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria in France, Vice Chairman of the North Caucasus Nations Committee (NCNC)

Mr. Stanislovas Buškevičius

Former Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania

Mr. Syres Bolaen

Inyazor (Chief Elder) of the Erzya people, President of the League of Free Nations (FNL)

12:00 – 12:30

BREAK



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12:30 – 13:00

Music Performance

Mr. Murat Ozden

13:00 – 14:00

Panel III - Resistance and Survival in Ukraine, Crimea, and the North Caucasus

This panel examines the shared historical and contemporary struggles of Ukraine, Crimea, and the North Caucasus against imperial domination. Participants analyse the cultural, political, and strategic connections that bind these regions, shedding light on how resistance movements and the defense of identity continue to shape their pursuit of sovereignty and self-determination.

Moderator Prof. Dr. Adas Jakubauskas

Prof. Dr. Adas Jakubauskas

Lithuania–Circassian Partnership in Preserving Historical Memory and Building Democratic Resilience

Mr. Audronius Ažubalis

Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania

Mr. Žygimantas Pavilionis

Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America and Mexico (2010-2015)

Mr. Martin Kochesoko

Founder of KHABZE (ХАБЗЭ) Organization

Mr. Blangaps Rudin

Chairman of the Circassian National Council

Ms. Ayla Bakkali (Live Online)

Crimean Tatar Majlis, United Nations Representative — Crimea and Circassia: Historical and Cultural Relations and Similarities



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Mr. Djamboulat Souleimanov

United Force, Chechen National Liberation Movement

Mr. Arūnas Degutis

Former Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Signatory of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania

Mr. Oleg Pankevich

Ukraine: Nationhood, Resilience, and Democratic Aspirations

Mr. Dorzho Dugarov

Advisor on International Affairs of the Free Nations League (FNL), Leader of the Buryat National Movement

Mr. Audrius Butkevičius

Former Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, Signatory of the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania

14:00 – 15:00

Panel IV- Recognition and Responsibility: The Circassian Genocide in International Law and Global Politics

Focusing on the Circassian Genocide through the framework of international law, the panel examines the legal criteria for recognition, the mechanisms of state accountability, and the moral obligations of the international community. The discussion highlights how legal norms, geopolitical dynamics, and contemporary human rights standards shape both the pursuit of justice and the evolving place of Circassia within the global order.

Moderator Dr. Sarah Slye

Congressman Joseph Wilson (Keynote Speaker) (Video Message)

U.S. Congressman and Chairman of the Helsinki Commission

Mr. Karl Altau (Keynote Speaker) (Video Message)

Director, Joint Baltic American National Committee



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Ms. Vasfije Krasniqi Goodman

Unbroken Nations: Kosovo and Circassia Confronting the Legacy of Genocide

Mr. Ahmad Zakaev

Prime Minister, Chechen Republic of Ichkeria — Supporting Ukraine and the Role of the North Caucasus Nations Committee

Mr. Refat Chubarov (Live Online)

Chairman, Crimean Tatar Mejlis

Ms. Maria Mezentseva (Live Online)

Member of Parliament, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Ms. Anna Fotyga (Live Online)

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Khawaj

Member of the International Adyghe Academy of Sciences, Member of the Jordanian Society of Friends of Circassians of the Caucasus

Mr. Oleksiy Goncharenko (Video Message)

Member of Parliament, Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine

Mr. Mirza Davitaia (Video Message)

Former Minister of State for the Diaspora, Georgia (Recorded Message)

Mr. Temuri Yakobashvili (Video Message)

Former Ambassador of Georgia to Washington, USA

15:00 – 15:15

BREAK



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15:15 – 16:00

Panel V - Reclaiming Historical Truth and Democratic Futures: Circassia in Global Context

This panel examines how historical injustices continue to shape contemporary struggles for recognition, democratic resilience, and the politics of memory in the Baltic, Caucasus, and Eastern European regions. By integrating perspectives from international jurisprudence, political theory, and regional studies, the panel considers how the Circassian case contributes to broader debates on sovereignty, identity, and historical truth.

Moderator Prof. Dr. Brian Glyn Williams

Prof. Dr. Brian Glyn Williams

University of Massachusetts Dartmouth

Dr. Yusuf Bahadir Keskin

State Responsibility and Accountability: Russia's Historical Obligations in International Law

Prof. Dr. Lidia Zhigunova (Live Online)

From Treaty Violations to Genocide: Russia's Ongoing Occupation of Circassia and Lithuania's Role in Historical Justice

Prof. Dr. Madina Tlostanova (Live Online)

Towards the Circassian political imagination: ways to refuting otherwise in the world of geopolitical conflicts, enviro-climatic crises and accelerationist narratives

Dr. Mustafa Canbek

Organizational History of the Circassian Diaspora: Efforts to Put the Circassian Question on the International Agenda

Mr. Paul Goble (Message)

Paths to Independence: Lessons from the Baltic, Caucasian, and Eastern European Nations

Mr. Deni Taps (Message)

Chairman of Caucasus Union Political Movement

Mr. Taner Aday

Criteria for Recognition: The Circassian Case within International Jurisprudence



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16:00-16:45

Panel VI - Voices of Circassia: Defining the Present and Shaping the Future

This panel unites Circassian advocates to discuss the movement's current challenges, global cooperation, and future direction. Together, they explore strategies for advancing recognition, strengthening identity, and ensuring Circassia's voice remains active on the international stage.

Moderator Mr. Iyad Youghar

Mr. Iyad Youghar

Chairman of the North Caucasus Nations Committee (CNCN), Chairman of the International Circassian Council (ICC)

Mr. Michael Zack Barsik

International activist in Circassian affairs, member of the International Circassian Council, Chairman of the Circassian Cultural Institute (CCI)

Ms. Tamara Barsik (Live Online)

International Circassian Council (ICC) — Legal, Historical, and Political Aspects of Circassian Genocide Recognition and Its Positive Impact on Lithuania

Mr. Rustam Khuazhev

Council of United Circassia

Ms. Didem Baş

Circassian Associations Federation

Mr. John Hakan Cinaz

Recognition, Truth, and Moral Responsibility: The Ethical Imperative of the 21st Century

Ms. Dana Wajoukh (Live Online)

International Circassian Council (ICC)



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16:45 – 17:00

Closing Session

Prof. Dr. Adas Jakubauskas

Dr. Orhan Barsiq, Council of United Circassia

17:00

X. SUBMISSION TO THE SEIMAS WITH THE REQUEST OF THE RECOGNITION OF THE CIRCASSIAN GENOCIDE WITH A LETTER SIGNED BY THE PARTICIPANTS.

17:30

RECEPTION

HILTON GARDEN INN HOTEL



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Institutions and NGOs Organizing, Supporting, or Represented at the Conference



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