

**REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE DEPORTATION OF THE AHISGA (MESKHETI)  
TURKS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES**

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## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK

**Relevance and degree of completion of the topic:** One of the problems in the modern history of the Caucasus with high scientific relevance is the issue of the deportation of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks in the 1940s and their struggle to return to their ancestral homeland. The forcible deportation of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks from their native lands, where they had lived for millennia, by the Soviet leadership on false charges during World War II, the severe deprivations they faced at that time, their acquittal in the mid-1950s, but the artificial obstacles created in their way to return to their native lands, and their struggle to eliminate them, are of great scientific importance as a subject of special research.

It is extremely important to fully investigate the activities of the Azerbaijani leadership towards restoring historical justice regarding the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks, the steps taken to resettle those who could not return to their homeland in Azerbaijan, and the issues related to the re-displacement of the Ahiska (Meskheti) Turks as a result of the bloody Fergana events that took place in Uzbekistan in the late 1980s.

The study of the tragic problems faced by the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks after the collapse of the USSR, the search for ways out of this situation, and the study of their struggle on this path are of great political and practical importance.

It should be borne in mind that the full restoration of peace and tranquility in the Caucasus also depends to a large extent on the fair and just resolution of the numerous problems faced by the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks in accordance with the national interests of these suffering people.

The study of the difficulties faced by the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks during their deportation and return to their homeland is also of great importance in terms of clarifying the issues of Armenian nationalists presenting the historical homeland of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks as Javakhetia - the ancient Armenian land, and on this basis making territorial claims to Georgia.

The subject of the study is the Russian Empire's relocation of Armenian families living in the Ottoman Empire to newly occupied

territories in the Caucasus, including the Ahisga region located along the border, after the 1829 Edirne Peace Treaty, and especially the rapid settlement of Armenians here after the forced relocation of the local Muslim-Turkish population of this region in 1944, which is also useful in terms of investigating the issues of exposing Armenian lies in this regard.

All of the above has necessitated a comprehensive investigation of the problems faced by the Ahisga (Meskhetian) Turks during their deportation and subsequent rehabilitation.

The historical past, ethnic identity, as well as their customs and traditions, socio-economic life, and economic problems of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks, one of the ancient indigenous peoples of the Caucasus, have not been studied in detail to this day. There are conflicting opinions about the ethnic origin of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks and the boundaries of the territory they inhabited. Most of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks call themselves "Turks" and consider Turkey to be their historical homeland. According to some Georgian researchers, they are "Muslim Georgians" and should be considered Meskheti Georgians due to their territory.<sup>1</sup> According to some Georgian researchers, they are "Muslim Georgians" and should be considered Meskheti Georgians due to their territory.

Works written in Azerbaijani about the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks are a minority. Among the works written on this topic, Jamil Hasanli's monographs<sup>2</sup> should be specially noted. In his work "The National Question in Azerbaijan: Political Leadership and Intellectuals (1954–1959)", the appeals and proposals of the Azerbaijani leadership to Moscow in the second half of the 1950s to improve the situation of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks, and the settlement of some of them in the regions of Azerbaijan were widely covered. In the author's monograph published in 2025, this topic was interpreted by involving more factual material. In this work, Jamil Hasanli especially noted that Armenians

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<sup>1</sup> Юнусов, А.С. Месхетинские тюрки: дважды депортированный народ. / А. Юнусов. - Баку, - 2000. - с.32-33.

<sup>2</sup> Həsənli C.P. Azərbaycanca milli məsələ: siyasi rəhbərlik və ziyahılar (1954 - 1959). – Bakı: Adiloğlu nəşriyyatı, - 2008, - 544 s; Həsənli C.P. Azərbaycanca Sovet liberalizmi: Hakimiyyət. Ziyahılar. Xalq (1959-1969). – Bakı: Adiloğlu nəşriyyatı, - 2018. – 760 s; Həsənli C.P. Bağirovdan sonrakı Azərbaycan: ümidlər və illuziyalar. – Bakı: Qanun nəşriyyatı, - 2025. – 680 s..

consider Javakheti “historically an integral part of Armenia”<sup>3</sup> and demand its unification with Armenia.

Asif Hajili's works on the literature, ethnic identity, culture, and traditions of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks can be considered valuable research. His monograph "Axısqa türkləri: Vətən bilgisi."<sup>4</sup> contains interesting information about their historical past, customs, folklore, literary figures, and their works.

Turkish-language works published in Turkey are also useful in terms of studying certain issues related to the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks. Historian Ayshegul Aydıngün's work "Ahıska Türkleri: ulusötesi bir topluluk, ulusötesi aileler"<sup>5</sup> sheds light on certain issues related to the origin, historical past, deportation, struggle for return to the homeland, the Fergana tragedy, and the situation in modern times of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks. In his work, the origin of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks is taken from the Bunturks who lived in Meskheti and its surroundings in the 4th century BC, and later it is noted that the arrival of the Huns, Khazars and Kipchaks in this area had a significant impact on ethnic unity.

Another Turkish researcher, Yunus Zeyrek, wrote a work entitled “Ahıska bölgesi ve Ahıska türkləri”<sup>6</sup> dedicated to various problems of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks. The work discusses events at different stages of the history of the Ahisga people, their national heroes, and emphasizes the important role played by the city of Ahisga in the life of the region.

When talking about Russian-language literature, it is necessary to first mention the work of the Azerbaijani researcher Arif Yunusov<sup>7</sup>. In this work, the deportation of the Turkish population of Ahisga and the difficult life of exile in Central Asia are concisely studied. The research of the Russian historian N. Bugay on the deportation of the

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<sup>3</sup> Həsənli C.P. Azərbaycanca Sovet Liberalizmi: Hakimiyyət. Ziyalılar. Xalq. - Bakı, - 2018. – 760 s.; Həsənli C.P. Bağirovdan sonrakı Azərbaycan: ümidlər və illuziyalar. - Bakı, - 2025, s.220

<sup>4</sup> Hacılı, A.A. Axısqa türkləri: Vətən bilgisi. / A. Hacılı, İstanbul, 2009. - 584 s.

<sup>5</sup> Aydıngün, A. Ahıska Türkleri: ulusötesi bir topluluk, ulusötesi aileler, / A. Aydıngün, İ. Aydıngün. - Ankara, - 2014, - 199 s.

<sup>6</sup> Zeyrek, Y. Ahıska Bölgesi ve Ahıska Türkleri. / Y. Zeyrek, - Ankara: Pozitif Matbaacılık, - 2001. - 254 s.

<sup>7</sup> Юнусов, А.С. Месхетинские тюрки: дважды депортированный народ. / А. Юнусов. – Баку: Заман – 2000. - 164 с.

Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks and the subsequent processes<sup>8</sup> is especially valuable, since it is written on the basis of official documents. The author's research on the struggle of the Ahisga Turks to return to their homeland is particularly noteworthy.

The research work on the Fergana events - the forced expulsion of the Ahisga population from their homes and their subsequent deportation based on official documents - is also rich in factual materials.<sup>9</sup> Articles<sup>10</sup> published in the Russian press on some aspects of the tragic Fergana events are also of some importance to our research.

A number of works written in English, French, and German, as well as electronic resources<sup>11</sup>, have included the deportation process of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks, as well as the events before and after

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<sup>8</sup> Бугай, Н. Кавказ: народы в эшелонах (20-60-е годы). / Н. Бугай А. Гонов. - Москва: "Инсан", - 1998. - 361 с; Бугай, Н. 40-50-е годы: Последствия Депортации Народов (Свидетельствуют Архивы НКВД-МВД СССР) // История СССР. - Москва, 1992. № 1. - С. 122-143; Бугай, Н. Турки из Месхетии: долгий путь к реабилитации. / Н. Бугай. - Москва: ТОО "Издательский дом "РОСС", - 1994. - 161 с.

<sup>9</sup> Иванов, Н. Следователь из провинции. / Н. Иванов. - Санкт-Петербург: Шанс, - 1995. - 381 с.

<sup>10</sup> Кляцкни, Г. Горячие точки Ферганы. // Правда Востока. - 1989, 2 июля, № 154. - С. 2; О событиях в Ферганской области (специальный корреспондент УзТАГ сообщает). // Правда Востока. - 1989, 10 июня, №136. - С. 4; Таранов, С. Ферганская область: обстановка обострилась. // Известия. - 1989, 10 июня, № 161, - с. 11; Что стоит за событиями в Фергане? (Наш корр.). // Литературная Газета. - 1989, 14 июня, № 24, - с. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Ahıska Türkleri Ukrayna'da ölümden kaçıp Türkiye'ye sığınıyor. / 2014, Ağustos 21. <https://www.haberler.com/guncel/ahıska-turkleri-ukrayna-da-olumden-kacip-turkiye-6401535-haberi>; Devrişova, N. Kırgızistan'da Yaşayan Sürgün Lazlar (PDF). / <http://www.ahıska.org.tr/?p=1194>; Doğan, İ. Ahıska Türklerinin Vatana Dönüşünde Uluslararası Hukuk Bakımından Sorumluluk. / İ. Doğan, B. L. Nacioğlu // "Bizim Ahıska" Dergisi, - Ankara- 2007, sayı 7, / <http://www.ahıska.org.tr/?p=502>; Zeyrek, Y. Ahıskalıların Büyük Sürgünü. 27.08.2009. / <http://www.ahıska.net/tarih/ahıskalilarin-buyuk-surgunu>; Chervonnaya, S. The problem of FUEN-delegation of the Meskhet Turks-Fact-Finding- Mission of FUEN- delegation of Georgia. November, 1988. / Fledsburg, - 1988. [https://www.cilevics.eu/minelres/min/meskh/FUEN\\_Meskh.htm](https://www.cilevics.eu/minelres/min/meskh/FUEN_Meskh.htm); Jean-Jacques, M. Les Peuples Déportés D'Union Soviétiques. / M. Jean-Jacques. - Paris: Edition Complexe. - 1995. - 201 p; Conquest R. Stalins Völkermord: Wolgadeutsche, Krimtataren, Kaukasier / R. Conquest. - Wien, - 1974. - 235 s.

the deportation. In the dissertation work, we have used the factual materials reflected in these works and articles.

Documents and materials preserved in the State Archives of the Republic of Azerbaijan are valuable sources reflecting information<sup>12</sup> about the settlement of the Ahişga (Meskheti) Turks in Azerbaijan. This information, which was brought into scientific circulation for the first time, is important from the point of view of studying the activities of the republic's leadership in the direction of resettlement of the Ahişga (Meskheti) Turks.

Articles<sup>13</sup> published in the newspapers "Sovet Gurcüstani", "Zaman", "Axısxa" about the participation of the Ahişga (Meskheti) Turks in the Second World War, their deportation and their struggle to return to their homeland also contain interesting factual materials.

During the research of the dissertation topic, attention was also paid to the articles<sup>14</sup> of the great thinker of the Ahişga Turks, Omer Faiğ Nemanzade, about the life of his native people in the first decades of the 20th century, and to the factual materials reflected in Shamil Gurbanov's work<sup>15</sup> about the life of O.F. Nemanzade and the tragic fate of the Ahişga intellectuals in his person, and the attitudes of these authors to various events and facts were expressed.

**Object and subject of research:** The object of the research is the deportation of the Ahişga Turks and the problems they faced as a result of this process. It mainly covers the following issues:

1. The deportation process dealt an extremely heavy blow to the lives of the Ahişga Turks, causing a sharp decrease in their numbers.

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<sup>12</sup> Saatlı rayon XDS İcraiyyə Komitəsinin Sədri T. F. İsmayılovanın Azərbaycan SSR Nazirlər Soveti Sədrinin müavini E. Protokoves yoldaşa məktubu. // Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Arxivi. Fond №411, siyahı №55, iş №1134, vərəq-1; Şamxor RİK-nin sədri C. M. Məmmədovun Azərbaycan SSR Nazirlər Sovetinin sədri A. N. Mütəllibov yoldaşa məktubu. // Azərbaycan Respublikası Dövlət Arxivi, fond №411, siyahı №55, iş № 06/431, vərəq-1;

<sup>13</sup> Bol məhsul əldə etmişlər. // Sovet Gürcüstani, 14 yanvar 1942-ci il, №5, - s. 2; Mustafa, Ə. Ahişqa türkünün qara taleyi. / "Zaman" qəzeti 2010, 23-24 sentyabr, - s. 10. <http://www.anl.az/down/meqale/merkez/2010/sentyabr/133716.htm>; Bayraqdarov, R. Ömrünü vətən uğrunda mübarizəyə həsr etmiş insan. // "Axısxa" qəzeti, 2014, mart. №4/4. - s. 6.

<sup>14</sup> Nemanzadə, Ö. F. Seçilmiş əsərləri. / Ö. F. Nemanzadə. - Bakı: Yazıçı, 1992, - 531 s.

<sup>15</sup> Qurbanov, Ş. Ömər Faiğ Nemanzadə. / Ş. Qurbanov - Bakı: Gənclik, 1992. 208 s.

Settlement in new places led to serious changes in such basic social areas as housing and employment, education, and health.

2. The deportation limited the national and political rights of the Ahisga Turks and weakened their political activity. Since it was impossible to carry out political activity in the new conditions, they faced political restrictions.

3. The deportation severely affected the economic life of the Ahisga Turks, causing restrictions on finding work and engaging in labor activities in new territories. This had a negative impact on their economic position and the process of integration into the labor market. Thus, the deportation of the Ahisga Turks and their struggle to adapt to these changes and improve their living conditions in new places is the object of the study.

The subject of the study is a comprehensive study of the reasons and excuses for the deportation of local Turkish families living in the Ahisga (Meskheta) region by the Soviet regime, the process of forced resettlement and some aspects that remained unnoticed at that time, the socio-political environment of that time, legal and cultural changes, social and psychological consequences, the impact of these consequences on modern relations, and the entire spectrum of relations between the Georgian official circles and the Ahisga Turks.

**The purpose and tasks of the research:** The main goal of the research is to study in detail and evaluate the history of the deportation process of the Ahisga Turks, the political and socio-cultural reasons that gave rise to it, the impact of this process on the lives of the Turks, their ethnic identity, and interstate relations. For this purpose, the following tasks were set:

- To collect and analyze information on the historical past, cultural life, customs and traditions of the Ahisga Turks and their ethnic identity;
- To conduct research on the participation of the Ahisga Turks in military operations during the Second World War, their heroism and sacrifices;
- To determine the political reasons for the deportation process, the goals pursued by the authorities;
- To comprehensively examine the existing historical documents and materials on the deportation process, as well as documents, archival materials and other sources that have not yet been put into

scientific circulation.

- To study the operational plans and implementation reports on the deportation process, to study the positions of international human rights organizations on the deportation process and the measures taken;

- To comparatively analyze the different positions and arguments of researchers on the deportation process, their approaches to official documents;

- To collect and study statistical data on the number and places of settlement of Ahisga Turks during and after the deportation;

- To determine the impact of the deportation process on the demographic and socio-economic situation of Ahisga Turks;

- To analyze the impact of deportation on the social and psychological situation of Ahisga Turks, the impact of family division, separation of family members, etc. on family relations, the impact of the loss of the head of the family on the economic situation of family members, the difficulties of restoring family ties broken during deportation;

- To study the role of the UN, the Council of Europe and other international organizations in the process of acquitting Ahisga Turks in the post-deportation period;

- To investigate the causes of the Fergana events, the cruel attitude towards the Ahisga Turks and its severe consequences;

- To determine the socio-political campaigns carried out by the Ahisga Turks to return to their homeland and the role of the leaders and public figures of this movement;

- To investigate the current problems related to the rights and living conditions of the Ahisga Turks in the modern era and to determine solutions.

**Research methods:** In the research work, the events that occurred in the history of the Ahisga Turks and the deportation process were objectively and impartially investigated on the basis of official documents and other sources from different years. Analysis, synthesis, and generalization methods were widely used, and critical evaluation, historical-comparative and systematic analysis methods were preferred. During the research, traditional research methods were generally accepted and established in historical science, such as revealing the cause-effect relationships of events, analyzing and generalizing the obtained results, and

observing chronological and logical sequences, were applied.

Statistical analysis was used to analyze the changes in the number and demographic indicators of the Ahisga Turks as a result of the deportation, statistical analysis to analyze the facts related to the socio-economic situation, and structural analysis methods to determine the changes that occurred in the socio-cultural life of the Ahisga Turks after the deportation and their consequences.

**Main points presented to the defense of the dissertation:** The main premise defended in the research work is that, for the first time in the historiography of the Native land, the deportation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks by the Soviet government - their forced expulsion from their ancestral homeland without any grounds and its grave consequences - was taken as the object of research and systematically and comprehensively investigated in the dissertation work. It is considered necessary to defend the following propositions in the research:

- Identification of facts related to the socio-political life and economic situation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks in the first two decades of the Soviet regime, the aggravation and oppression of their situation by the local authorities of Georgia;
- Revealing important facts about the unparalleled heroism and courage shown by the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks on the front lines during the Second World War;
- The reasons for the Soviet government's decision to deport the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks and the important points related to the course of the deportation process, and the emergence of new approaches;
- The ability of tens of thousands of deported Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks to preserve their national customs and traditions despite the injustices and deprivations they faced during their resettlement in new places;
- The ability of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks to regulate their mutual relations with the local population in the new places where they were resettled, albeit with difficulty;
- The acquittal of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks, the forms of their struggle to return to their homeland and their results;
- The migration of a part of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks to Azerbaijan and the processes related to their lifestyle and labor activities there;
- The reasons for the occurrence of the Fergana events, the bitter

consequences of the events on the fate of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks, and their investigation and generalization;

- An examination of the main results of the struggle of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks for the return to their homeland, which has lasted for more than half a century, and the facts regarding the current situation of those who were able to return to Georgia and settled in Russia, Turkey and other countries.

**Scientific novelty of the research.** The deportation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks and its consequences have been comprehensively investigated in this research work for the first time in its entirety. In addition, the scientific innovations of the dissertation can be listed as follows:

- The historical background, living conditions, socio-political, economic and cultural situation, customs and traditions of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks before the deportation have been systematically investigated for the first time;

- The reasons and consequences of the oppression of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks in Georgia have been extensively analyzed in research for the first time, and the beginning of an active struggle among the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks to preserve and develop their national culture since the beginning of the 20th century has been studied;

- The active participation and heroism of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks in the Second World War has been interpreted for the first time with concrete facts;

- The process of the deportation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks has been studied in detail in a historical context for the first time.

- The settlement of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks in the new places they were resettled in and the difficulties they faced: the lack of necessary housing and land, the social, economic and cultural deprivations they faced were highlighted based on primary sources;

- The impact of the consequences of deportation on demographics, economic and social structures was studied in detail for the first time;

- The acquittal of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks, their struggle to return to their homeland and their migration to Azerbaijan, and the sacrifice they made to preserve their cultural and ethnic identity at that time were highlighted in detail for the first time;

- For the first time, the Fergana events were presented in the

study as an example of ethnic tensions in the region and the weakness of the governance system in the last years of the Soviet Union;

- The modern situation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks, their dispersion to various geographical regions, the social, political and economic problems they faced, and the achievements they achieved were explained with concrete facts.

**Theoretical and practical significance of the research:** The dissertation clarifies the political and legal aspects of the deportation events analyzed in the historical context. The results of the research can be used in writing general works and textbooks on the history of the Turkic world, as well as in preparing general and special lectures on the political history of the Turkic peoples in higher education institutions. The factual material in the dissertation is also important for scholars, politicians and international organizations working in the historical, legal, political and social fields.

**Approbation and application of the research:** Six scientific articles reflecting the main results of the dissertation work were published in foreign and republican scientific journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as in the materials of scientific conferences held in the republic and foreign countries.

**The name of the organisation where the dissertation work was carried out:** The dissertation work was carried out at the Department of History of the Caucasian Peoples of Baku State University. The dissertation was discussed at the meeting of the department held on March 14, 2025, with the participation of invited specialists from the Institute of History and Ethnology of ANAS and Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University and was recommended for public defense.

**The total volume of the dissertation.** The dissertation consists of an introduction (19 thousand 253 characters), three chapters divided into paragraphs (Chapter I – 58 thousand 405 characters) (Chapter II – 47 thousand 767 characters), (Chapter III – 107 thousand 651 characters), a conclusion (11 thousand 026 characters), and a list of references. The total volume of the text part of the dissertation is 275 thousand 103 characters.

## MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The applicant substantiated the relevance of the research topic in the **"Introduction"** and stated that one of the most scientifically relevant problems of the modern history of the Caucasus is the issue of the deportation of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks in the 40s of the 20th century and their struggle to return to their ancestral homeland. The forcible deportation of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks from their native lands where they had lived for millennia by the Soviet leadership on false charges during World War II, the severe deprivations they faced at that time, their acquittal in the mid-1950s, but the artificial obstacles created in their way to return to their homeland are of great scientific importance as a special research topic.

The history, origin, as well as the economic and economic problems of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks, one of the ancient peoples of the Caucasus, have not been comprehensively studied to this day. It should be noted that there are conflicting opinions about the origin of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks and the territories they settled.

The Armenian settlement, which began with the Russian Empire's relocation of Armenian families living in the Ottoman Empire to the newly occupied territories in the Caucasus, including the Ahisga region located along the border, after the Edirne Peace Treaty, is also useful in terms of studying the issues of the rapid settlement of Armenians after the forced relocation of the local Muslim-Turkish population of this region in 1944, and exposing the Armenian lie in this regard.

The resettlement of Armenian families from the territory of the Ottoman Empire to the South Caucasus under the terms of the Edirne Peace Treaty, which ended the Russo-Ottoman War of 1828-1829, and the subsequent relocation of new Armenian families to the territories where they had lived after the deportation of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks in November 1944, in fact paved the way for the emergence of a new conflict zone in the South Caucasus over time and for the Armenians to make new territorial claims. The researcher has pointed out that this factor is considered one of the main reasons preventing the return of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks to Georgia to this day.

In the **"Introduction"** section, after justifying the relevance of the topic, the degree of its development is touched upon, and an attitude

is expressed to works that deal with various issues of the research work or are distinguished by their proximity to it. In this section, the applicant was able to correctly determine the object and subject of the research.

In this part, the sections discussing the theoretical basis, source base, and scientific novelty of the research can be considered normal. The points defended in the dissertation are presented separately in different groups that contribute to a comprehensive study of the topic.

The composition and content of the sections discussing the theoretical basis, source base, and practical significance of the research are also normal. The applicant, referring to the main purpose of the research, states that this is to study and evaluate in detail the history, political, and socio-cultural reasons for the deportation of the Ahisga Turks and the impact of this process on the life, identity, and relations of the Turks with other states.

The first chapter of the research, entitled **“Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks in the period before the deportation”**, follows three subchapters. In the first subchapter, entitled **“The origin of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks and their history before deportation”**, the applicant comments on the main stages of the history of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks from ancient times to the beginning of the 20th century and the most important events that occurred during their course.

The area where the Ahisga Turks settled is at the starting point of the Kipchak tribes. In addition, the physical structure of the Ahisga Turks, who did not mix with the Azerbaijani Turks, is very similar to the Kipchaks in many respects. The physical structure of the Ahisga Turks is slightly higher than that of the Kipchaks, and this difference should be assessed in terms of climate and geography.

The fact that the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks mixed with the ancient Huns and Scythians, and were part of various states - the Seljuk, Mongol empires, Atabegs, Safavid, Ottoman states, and Tsarist Russia - is reflected in this research topic. In particular, the fact that the Ahisga region and its surroundings became a battlefield between the Russian and Ottoman empires from the beginning of the 19th century, part of the population was destroyed, and part of it was forced to migrate has been investigated in detail by the applicant. Therefore, it is possible to say that the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks have a rich historical past.

After World War I, with the end of the Tsarist era in Russia and

the beginning of the Communist Soviet era, while the Abkhaz, Ossetian and Adjarian Muslims within the borders of Georgia were granted autonomy, it is noteworthy that Ahisga and its surroundings were not granted autonomy and were directly connected to Tbilisi. This period is remembered as a period full of tragedies for the Turkic noble peoples and also for the Ahisga people. Thus, in 1919, the Georgian oppression in Ahisga and its surroundings weakened the patience of the people and brought them to the point of rebellion.

One of the painful pages of this history that has lasted for millennia occurred when the eastern border of Turkey was determined by the March 1921 Moscow and October Kars Treaties signed between the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and the Soviet Union. According to the Moscow Treaty, Ahisga, Akhalkalaki and Batumi remained outside the borders of Turkey, while Kars and Ardahan remained within Turkey. Azerbaijan, Georgia and Armenia accepted that the Moscow and Kars Treaties were valid for them as well. With the drawing of political borders, Turkey's historical and cultural, especially physical-geographical, ties with Ahisga were severed.

In the second half-chapter, titled **“The oppression of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks in Georgia”**, the doctoral student noted that the oppression of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks, who were forced to stay in Georgia during the Soviet regime, had sometimes had bitter consequences. The Ahisga Turks were greatly affected by the repression policy that Stalin began to implement towards the end of the 1920s.

In the late 1920s, especially in the 1930s, the Soviet regime's policy of discrimination and oppression against the Ahisga Turks caused many Ahisga Turks to flee to Turkey, and hundreds of families were broken up. There were deaths and many personal tragedies during illegal crossings. In the 1930s, the cost of living as a Turk and a Muslim began to become even more burdensome. These were also the years when Georgian chauvinism began to increase.

The “collectivisation” policy, which had an economic impact in 1928-1933, began in Ahisga in 1929, and the Ahisga Turks, like all peoples, were strongly affected by this policy. The collectivisation of land led to the further impoverishment of the Ahisga Turks, who were already living in extremely difficult economic conditions. This was followed by the Second World War, which began in 1939.

In the third subchapter, entitled **“The activities of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks in the Second World War”**, the applicant states that although the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks actively participated in the Great Patriotic War and fought against the partisan groups of the movement, the total number of Ahisga Turks who were captured and exiled to the Central Asian republics for some reason that turned out to be fabricated was 10 thousand. Despite their military prowess and well-deserved awards during the war, the Ahisga Turk soldiers were sent to places of deportation after the war. The names and fate of thousands of soldiers are unknown, and the personnel files of special forces soldiers have been removed from the archives.

The second chapter of the research work is called **“The process of deportation of Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks”**. This chapter consists of 2 subchapters. The subchapter titled **“The beginning of the deportation of Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks”** states that during the Second World War, Stalin, who saw the national feelings of ethnic groups as a threat, deported hundreds of thousands of people from their homelands - Crimea, the Volga region, the Caucasus - at the end of 1944, loading them into open or closed train cars and trucks and deporting them to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Siberia. While the Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans and other deported peoples were accused of collaborating with the Germans, the Ahisga Turks faced allegations of espionage and smuggling on behalf of Turkey.

The fact that the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks, who were deported to the Central Asian Republics on false charges in November 1944 and forced to live there for 12 years under various socio-economic problems, were acquitted in 1956, but were not granted the right to return to their homeland like other peoples, is one of the injustices committed against this people and, unfortunately, has not been resolved to this day. This was an indicator of the national discrimination policy implemented against the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks. Their various social, political and cultural ties with the Azerbaijani people, their ethnic identity, language and religious unity have led to the fact that today the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks consider Azerbaijan their native homeland.

The Ahisga Turks were initially planned to be deported not to Central Asia, but to Eastern Georgia. For this reason, local Azerbaijanis and Kurds living in eastern Georgia were forcibly resettled and

settled in the Kvemo-Kartli region.

However, at the suggestion of the Soviet Minister of Internal Affairs Beria, their deportation to this region was stopped, and it was decided to resettle them in the Central Asian Republics. In other words, Stalin, who signed the deportation decree, predicted that the Ahisga Turks, whom he condemned to camp in small groups in the rural areas of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, would easily assimilate amongst the Turkic peoples. In addition to limiting their relations with groups belonging to different religions, the Ahisga Turks did not establish very close relations with the peoples of Central Asia, who belonged to the same religion but had different cultural characteristics.

The Ahisga Turks, whether Muslim or not, limited their relations with other ethnic groups to the public sphere, and family and group relations dominated the private sphere. This situation is most evident in marriages.

Intermarriage amongst the Ahisga Turks, even with Muslim groups, remains extremely limited.

According to official data, about 96,000 Ahisga Turks were deported from their homelands to designated territories. However, at first glance, it seemed that the figures given in the official data were deliberately understated.

On November 26, 1948, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR issued a decree ordering the deported people to remain in the places to which they had been deported. This decree applied to Chechens, Ingush, Crimean Tatars, Volga Germans, Balkars, Kalmyks, and Ahisga Turks.

The resettlement policy was carried out so hastily and rapidly that even the Kazakh government proposed to postpone the resettlement for a while. Because certain preparations were needed to accept those sent to exile. However, L. Beria, in a telegram sent to the Kazakh leadership on November 16, 1944, stated that it was impossible to stop the resettlement.

In the second half-chapter entitled **“The resettlement of the Ahisga (Meskheti) Turks in a new place and the deprivations they faced”** the author notes that the 1944 deportation was a great trauma for those living in exile. The Ahisga Turks described this trauma as social pain. Thanks to their magnificent and extensive family solidarity, they were able to overcome this trauma and build a new life, and

they consciously passed on the deportation and the pain it brought from generation to generation. This deportation was one of the most fundamental factors that led to the preservation and strengthening of the Turkish consciousness of the Ahisga Turks.

In 1956, the exile sentence was lifted from the Ahisga Turks. But their right to return to their homeland was not recognised. Because the Georgian government, under various pretexts, did not allow any decision to be made on the return of the Ahisga Turks to their homeland. Supposedly, Georgians and Armenians were resettled in the homes of the Ahisga Turks, and their return could aggravate the situation in the region and lead to new ethnic conflicts. However, this was a blatant lie. As a result, some of the Ahisga Turks, who could not return to their homeland, migrated to Kabarda-Balkaria and the North Caucasus, including Azerbaijan, trying to be closer to their homeland.

The third chapter of the research work is called “**The rehabilitation process of the Ahisga (Meskhети) Turks**”. This chapter consists of 3 subchapters. The subchapter entitled “**The acquittal of the Ahisga (Meskhетian) Turks, their struggle for return to their homeland and their migration to Azerbaijan**” specifically notes that the struggle of the Ahisga Turks reached its peak, putting the governments of Moscow and Tbilisi in a difficult situation, and they felt obliged to immediately resolve the problem.

The Azerbaijani government did everything in its power to help the Ahisga Turks. Great Leader Heydar Aliyev, who had been leading Azerbaijan since 1969, was closely interested in the problems of the Ahisga Turks, met with their representatives, and tried to provide them with all possible care within the capabilities of the Soviet regime. In the early 1970s, the Ahisga Turks resorted to a new type of protest against the indifferent attitude of the Soviet leadership, which consistently refused to return them to their homeland.

Until the end of the 1980s, the only organisation of the Ahisga Turks' return to their homeland movement was the "Vatan" Society. With Gorbachev's coming to power and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union, many associations under different names were created in Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Ukraine.

The Ahisga Turk National Movement, which held 10 congresses between 1962 and 1989, developed various strategies for returning to

Georgia, but the obstacles in this matter could not be overcome. Although the Georgian view that emerged within the National Movement was not accepted by the majority of Ahisga Turks, it caused a split in the movement and, in a certain sense, supported Georgia, which defended the idea that Ahisga Turks were Georgians.

The author noted in the second half-chapter, entitled "**Fergana events**", that although the causes of the Fergana events have been investigated many times, despite the passage of years, the specific reasons have not been revealed. The following is possible reason for the Fergana events: the struggle of the Ahisga Turks reached its peak, putting the governments of Moscow and Tbilisi in a difficult position, and they felt obliged to immediately solve the problem. As a result of the responsibility of the international treaties signed by the USSR, the obligation to solve the problem came to the fore.

The basis of the Fergana events is the economic, political and cultural crisis that tore the Soviets apart from within. The policy of "divide and rule" was accelerated. The goal was to distract the people from the independence movements and the national liberation struggle.

The fact that the same processes took place in Georgia against the background of the independence tendencies that emerged in the USSR in the late 1980s, and the use of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks to prevent these processes, thereby drawing Georgia's attention to this issue, constitutes the main essence of the Fergana events. The pressure exerted by the local people against the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks in the Fergana region of Uzbekistan, as a result of which some of the Ahisgas were killed, and some were deported for a second time and forced to disperse to 10 different countries in the world, has been covered in detail by the researcher in this subchapter.

The applicant notes that the events in the Fergana region took place in three stages. The first stage was a clash between the Turks and the so-called "local population" in Kuvasay in the second half of May. The second was attacks on the Turks, mainly in Fergana, Margilan and neighbouring settlements. It is interesting that nothing happened in Kuvasay itself, although most of the opinions about "taking revenge" on the Turks were there, and it was precisely on condition that the clashes would resume. Thirdly, there were riots in Kokand and neighbouring areas. Interestingly, there were very few Turks in Kokand, and

practically none in neighbouring areas. However, the riots were widespread in Kokand and the surrounding areas, and there were crowds.

The last half-chapter, entitled "**The modern situation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks (return to Georgia, settlement in Russia, Turkey)**", deals with the modern situation of the Ahisga (Meskheta) Turks and notes that, having united in Russia, the activities of the Soviet Union were suspended. Stands out as a concrete problem that has gained scale, but has not yet found its solution.

Turkey is the place of residence for another large proportion of the Ahisga Turks. The Turkish government has granted citizenship to the Ahisga Turks and implemented various programs for their integration. Here, the Ahisga Turks live mostly in urban environments and work in various professional fields. Their educational, work and social rights are ensured. However, the issues of preserving cultural identity and strengthening intergenerational ties are also important.

Most of the Ahisga Turks who have migrated to Turkey since the early 1990s, mainly to Bursa and its surroundings, and later to many cities in Turkey, are Ahisga Turks who were dispersed from Uzbekistan to various regions of the Soviet geography after the Fergana events. In the early years, one of the most important reasons for settling in Bursa was that it was an industrial city and that it was easier to find work there. Other reasons were that Bursa was an immigrant city and that the new immigrants would be able to adapt more easily to the city due to the presence of Ahisga Turks who had previously come to the city.

Some Ahisga Turks want to return to Georgia, but this process is accompanied by difficulties. Although the Georgian government has taken certain measures for the return of Ahisga Turks, the process is progressing slowly. There are certain problems with the issues of settlement and citizenship for the returnees. Limited social integration and economic opportunities are also other obstacles faced by the returnees.

After the Fergana events, on July 13, 1989, the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, and on July 26, 1989, the Council of Ministers of the USSR adopted a decision on providing special state assistance to Ahisga Turks. In the late 1990s, migration to the North Caucasus increased, especially in the Krasnodar region.

Unlike Turkey, Russia continues to have a biased attitude towards

the Meskheta Turks, denying them citizenship and pursuing a policy of discrimination. In this regard, a large proportion of the Meskheta Turks have left Russia and sought refuge in Turkey and other countries.

In Russia, the Ahisga Turks live in a dispersed manner in different regions. Some of them are engaged in agriculture, while others work in the industry and service sectors. Although the Russian government has taken certain measures to protect the rights of the Ahisga Turks and social security issues, some regions experience problems with cultural and social integration.

The current situation of the Ahisga Turks varies depending on the geographical regions in which they are located. Issues of social integration, economic opportunities, preservation of cultural identity, and legal status are still amongst the problems that await resolution. International organisations and organisations defending the rights of the Ahisga Turks play an important role in resolving these issues.

The applicant concluded his research in the “**Conclusion**” section and stated the main conclusions he reached:

1. Preventing the statelessness of the Ahisga Turks is the duty of the entire international community, including Georgia. Citizenship is not a fundamental right guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights. However, Georgia’s obligations regarding the return of the Ahisga Turks are binding as a unilateral legal act and must also have consequences in terms of the protection of human rights.

2. Today, the Ahisga Turks are a nation scattered across 10 different countries of the world. The problems of this nation, which is an organic part of the Turkic world, are not only their own or Georgia’s problem, but a problem that concerns the entire Turkic world.

3. The Russian Federation, the successor of the Soviet Union and an important actor in resolving past events, has a different policy towards the region today. The Russian Federation taking steps towards supporting regional peace, becoming a key actor in reducing tensions in the Caucasus, and defining “basic human rights” for the Ahisga Turks living on its territory is the approach that hundreds of thousands of Ahisga Turks have been waiting for.

4. The most correct and meaningful demand is to ensure the rights related to the legal and humanitarian concepts contained in the declarations published by international organisations led by Western states,

which see themselves as representatives of democracy and human rights, and sign declarations “strongly condemning” every atrocity committed.

5. This may not be interpreted as implying to any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

**The main content of the dissertation is reflected in the following scientific articles and theses of the author:**

1. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin deportasiyası və onun nəticələri // – Bakı: Geostrategiya jurnalı, – 2022. №4(70), – s. 85-88.
2. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin faciəsi // – Bakı: Geostrategiya jurnalı, – 2022. №5(71), – s. 71-73.
3. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin etnik kimliyi // – Bakı: Geostrategiya jurnalı, – 2023. №4(76), – s. 60-64.
4. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərində maarif və elm // – Gəncə: Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası Gəncə bölməsi, Xəbərlər məcmuəsi jurnalı, – 2023. №4 (8), – s. 216-223.
5. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin “Vətən” Cəmiyyəti və vətənə qayıdış mübarizəsi, – Doktorantların və gənc tədqiqatçıların XXVI Respublika elmi konfransı, – Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, – 17-18 noyabr, – 2023, – s. 253-255.
6. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin mədəni həyatı // – Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, Tarix və onun problemləri jurnalı, – 2023. №3, – s. 253-256.
7. Migration of Ahısqa (Meskheti) Turks to the United States and living there // – Алматы: Вестник КазНУ. Серия историческая, – 2024. №3, – s. 122-133.
8. Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin Avropaya köçü, – Gənc tədqiqatçıların VII Respublika elmi konfransı, – Bakı: Azərbaycan Universiteti, – 15 mart, – 2024, – s. 370-372.
9. XX əsrin 90-cı illərində və XXI əsrin ilk onilliklərində Ahısqa (Mesxeti) türklərinin Gürcüstana qayıdış məsələsi, – “Cənubi Qafqaz yeni qlobal çağırışlar kontekstində” konfransı, – Bakı: Azərbaycan Universiteti, – 3 may, – 2024, – s. 252-254.
10. Participation of The Ahısqa (Meskheti) Turks in The First And Second Karabakh Wars, – 15th International Congresses on Social, Humanities, Administrative and Educational Sciences in a Changing World, – Ankara: Congress Proceedings Book, – 13-15 fevral, – 2025, – s. 1544-1545.

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