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Crimean Tatars to Erase Hitler Collaboration Chapter From History Textbook

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Alexei Pavlishak / TASS

Authorities in annexed Crimea will remove a chapter from a 10th grade history textbook that describes Crimean Tatars as collaborating with Hitler by the beginning of the next school year.

The pro-Moscow council of the Crimean Tatar ethnic group asked de-facto authorities in February to remove the offending textbook from local schools and libraries. The chapter was reported as saying that 20,000 Crimean Tatars served "the Hitlerites with arms" and 14,000 more "fought against [Soviet] partisans" in World War II.

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"A decision has been reached to avoid ethnic conflict. This chapter on collaboration will be

removed by the beginning of the school year," Crimea's Russian-backed education administration told Interfax on Monday.

Stalin deported more than 190,000 Crimean Tatars accused of sympathizing with Nazi Germany to the Urals, Siberia and Central Asia in 1944.

The majority Muslim Tatars were allowed to return in the waning days of the Soviet Union, whose 1991 collapse left Crimea in an independent Ukraine.

The Turkic community that makes up about 15 percent of Crimea's population has largely opposed Russian rule in the peninsula and say the 2014 annexation was illegal, a view supported by the West.

After annexing Crimea, President Vladimir Putin signed a decree in 2014 to rehabilitate Crimea's Tatars and other minorities who suffered under Stalin.

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