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## **BULGARIA'S FORGOTTEN CAMPAIGN TO WIPE OUT TURKISH NAMES**

- 03.02.2025

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RFE/RL (30 January 2025)

By Katerina Vasileva

*In 1989, five years after the Revival Process began, around 320,000 ethnic Turks were deported from Bulgaria.*

Around 40 years ago, in December 1984, the communist authorities in Bulgaria launched a violent and systematic campaign to force ethnic Turks to change their names to Bulgarian ones. It was part of the regime's Revival Process, which sought to establish a unified Bulgarian identity and also placed restrictions on the Turkish language and prohibited religious and cultural traditions.

The crackdown, which killed up to 2,500 Turks and resulted in the deportation of 320,000 people to Turkey five years later, is widely regarded as one of Europe's largest forced assimilation campaigns against a Muslim community in the 20th century. To this day, however, Bulgarian Turks claim justice has never been served, with no single person or institution ever held accountable.

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