

The Adyg People are known to be the first inhabitants who populated Sochi. This time they are going to share their culture and traditions with the world at the upcoming Winter Olympics. Prescription drugs will not likely save you from sexually transmitted diseases--including HIV and AIDS

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Having a language, traditions and national identity of their own, this ethnic family is getting ready to give a performance of their lifetime.

It's a fact that the Adyg people are part of the big ethnic Circassian family, who are among the first inhabitants of the Caucasus. Song and dance are in their flesh and blood, and an integral part of life and culture. And in less than four years, they would like to share their culture with the whole world, in Sochi.

"The idea is to give a bright and unforgettable performance that will demonstrate the rich culture of the Adyg-Shapsug people who have populated Sochi and the whole region for centuries," says Adyg community leader Murat Akhedzhak. "Doing that within the framework of the cultural program of the 2014 Olympics may help our people to tell the tale of this land to all guests of this big sporting event."

The region's deputy governor, Murat, also represents a powerful Circassian lobby.

Even though they are a minority in the Krasnodar region, the Adyg people have constitutional rights to preserve their language, traditions and national identity. Many Adygs fled their homeland in the 19th Century, during the Russian Tsar's conquest of the North Caucasus. But the great-grandchildren of those who stayed are now fully assimilated.

Although often called “the land of the Kuban Cossacks”, the Krasnodar region is home to more than 120 nationalities. Things have changed dramatically since the 19th Century Caucasus war, and all these ethnic groups now live in peace.

Currently, the Circassians have big and influential Diasporas in the Middle East, as well as in Europe and the US. Several activist groups in these countries have been holding rallies, calling for the cancellation of the next Winter Olympics, because *“Russia should not be allowed to hold the Sochi Olympics of 2014 on genocidal graves; on the graves of our ancestors.”*

And that is something that the Adyg leaders in Russia do not agree with. A recent survey by archeologists has not revealed any cemeteries in the Olympic park.

“According to our traditions the Adyg-Shapsug people buried their dead in or around settlements, but never on the mountain slopes where the Olympic construction is taking place, and never in the Imereti Lowland, where the Olympic park is being built,” explains Murat Akhedzhak. *“It’s nonsense, because there was a big swamp in the Imereti Lowland until the 1920s.”*