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Agenda Item: 3 Understanding the root causes of violence and atrocity crimes

Hate-Speech and Hate-Motivated Crimes against Muslim Turkish Minority-Greece

The Role of the State Authorities and Media

Ms./ Mr. Moderator,
Distinguished Participants,

Hate Crimes are the crimes that the perpetrators are motivated by different backgrounds or characteristics of the victims. In most cases the perpetrators are struck by ingrained prejudices that are learned systematically through history. Also, the perception of 'the others' plays important role.

Hate crimes could be defined differently in different places. Such as, "hate speech", "politically motivated violence", or "right or left wing extremism". In all circumstances victims are the victims and the States have the responsibility to prevent, to handle the causes of victimization.

In Greece, the oppressive and the discriminative assimilation policies of the State and the provocative nature of the majority media result in the victimization of the Muslim Turkish Minority of Western Thrace and also the migrants and others whose backgrounds are different from the Greek Orthodox majority. Although a bill passed by the Greek parliament in September 2014 that is toughening the anti-racism laws, raising the prison terms for instigating hate crimes, and imposing high amounts of fines for those instigating racism and racially motivated crimes, the reasons of the victimization of the Turkish Muslim Minority of Western Thrace remain untouched. Since the motives behind of those crimes are based of the historical prejudices of not just the perpetrators, but also the law-makers, the state authorities and media entrepreneurs.

The hate motivated crimes and hate speech examples of the region include the incidents that are involving damaging or painting of provocative slogans on the walls/tombstones and also on the walls of Turkish Minority Associations, and some recent incidents involving slaughtering of pigs in front of holy Muslim venues such as mosques and martyrdoms.

Ms/Mr. Moderator,

I would like to give one example that compelling the imaginations regarding the construction of a mosque in Athens. The spokesperson of the Golden Dawn party Mr. Ilias Kasidiaris told supporters that "If a mosque is constructed for Islamist criminals in Greece, a front of 100,000 Greeks headed by Golden Dawn will be created". The threat came days after the far-right party has given an ultimatum for Muslims to leave Greece or they will be "slaughtered like chickens". Then, the Muslim Association of Greece received a letter with the emblem of the far-right party threatening that if Muslims do not leave the country "there will be blood". The letter was in Greek, English and Arabic.

Ms/Mr. Moderator,

The Turkish Muslim Minority of Western Thrace recommends Greece,
To make necessary legal arrangements to prevent hate crimes, hate speech towards the Muslim Turkish Minority, in addition to the recent hate-crimes bill,
To treat the members of the Turkish Minority as equal citizens of Greece (by making necessary legal regulations) not historical enemies,
To remove prejudiced items regarding the Turks/Turkish Minority from the history textbooks,
To take immediate steps and make necessary legal arrangement to include human rights and tolerance courses on the school curriculum,
The Turkish Minority of Western Thrace urges Greece to conduct an objective, effective, result-oriented dialogue mechanism with the Turkish Minority Representatives.