

ECUMENICAL FEDERATION OF CONSTANTINOPOLITANS

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The respect to Minority Rights can only be effective, if it apprehends those states which violated human rights in the past on a massive scale and obliges them to provide essential remedies towards the victim communities. If the consequences of massive scale violations of the past are not subject to remedy and reparations measures, the whole system of human rights protection remains a vague, fuzzy and non-effective concept.

One has to ask the rhetoric question what is the meaning of respecting minority rights if a minority doesn't exit anymore.

The above-mentioned statements are precisely valid in the case of the Greek-Orthodox Minority of Istanbul which was under the protection of the International Lausanne Treaty (1923) and moreover the European Convention of Human Rights which the Republic of Turkey endorsed as early as 1954. However contrary to these protections, throughout the period of 1923-2003, our Minority faced massive scale violations of its human rights. These violations were well documented and presented in various Conferences including of U.N.

The most severe result of these violations was the complete population depletion of the Greek-Orthodox community living in Istanbul from 125.000 in 1950's to the present of approximately 1.000 persons.

As a Federation we have been raising this fundamental issue with the authorities of the Republic of Turkey. The only effective remedy measure is the support of repatriation to Istanbul, members of young generation which will prevent the complete extinction of our Minority. While we have submitted specific proposals to the authorities of Turkey, the response we received is limited.

The mentioned fundamental issue has been also reported one year ago to U.N. Special Rapporteur on Minority issues Dr. Fernand DE VARENNES and no response so far has been received.

We invite the authorities of the Republic of Turkey to expedite their responses to our proposals.

Furthermore we ask U.N. to place the 60/147 Resolution of General Assembly on the remedy and reparation of victim communities in the center of human and minority rights.