



UN Forum on Minority Issues
Conflict Prevention and the Protection of the
Human Rights of Minorities
14th Session, 2 and 3 December 2021

The Greek Minority in Turkey

STATEMENT

We represent the Constantinopolitan Society, a civil society organization, established in 1928 in Greece by forcibly expatriated members of the Greek minority of Istanbul. Our intervention will focus on the basic issues that are related to the human rights violations of the Greek minority in Turkey, which have not been resolved yet and are in contrast with what is in effect internationally and specifically with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Minorities, regarding the protection of non - Muslim minorities in Turkey.

Over many decades, Greek minority in Turkey has suffered numerous atrocity crimes, as a result of discriminatory and oppressive state policies.

In September 6-7, 1955, organized mobs attacked Istanbul's Greek minority in a special warfare operation orchestrated by the governing Democratic Party by the Special Warfare Service of the General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces. Besides physical violent attacks at persons, thousands of houses, shops, hospitals, schools, churches and cemeteries were totally wrecked and looted.

In 1964, the Turkish government forcibly deported 12,500 members of the Minority holding Greek citizenship being accused of having committed harmful actions against the Turkish state. Their properties were confiscated. An extensive program of repressive measures against Greek Minority, decided by the Turkish authorities, was put in force afterwards and continues so far.

By a series of legislative and administrative measures, the Turkish government has engineered the annihilation of the Greek minority by violating not only explicit international treaty obligations but also some of its own domestic laws.

All these measures are threatening the survival and future of the Greek minority in Turkey and have led to the dramatic decline of the Greek population of Turkey, from over 120,000 in the 1950's to less than 1,000 at present.

Despite official reassuring statements, the Turkish government has failed to take decisive actions to make the necessary institutional and administrative reforms to reverse these conditions. Full respect for and protection of Greek minority's fundamental human rights in accordance with international standards have yet to be achieved._



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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Turkish government is called upon to:

- take decisive actions to make the necessary institutional and administrative reforms to reverse discriminatory policies and human rights violations against Greek minority in order to prevent conflicts and atrocity crimes in the future.
- invite Greek minority representatives to the Turkish Grand National Assembly so as to actively influence the final provisions of any legislation affecting their rights
- revise the law on the National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in order to make it an independent body which is adequately accountable to the public and which includes the active participation of Greek minority members.
- fully implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and interpret the 1923 Lausanne Treaty so as to provide equal rights to the Greek Minority in Turkey.
- make sustained efforts to prevent and punish hate speech or crimes targeting persons belonging to minorities.
- delete all anti-minority references from schoolbooks used for teaching in Turkey, as it forges historic realities, fosters discriminatory behavior against members of the minority and incites hate actions.
- grant full legal personality to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, so that the latter may enjoy ownership rights, administration and management.
- reopen without any prerequisite the Theological School of Halki with exactly the same status it held before its arbitrary closure in 1971 and lift all obstacles to its proper functioning.