

Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (EFC)

UN Human Rights Council

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Dialogue with the Expert on Minorities

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Thank you Mr. President

The Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans (EFC) wishes to present to the Independent Expert on Minorities the case of the minority Greek-Orthodox community of Istanbul, Gökçeada and Bozcaada (Community), which fully applies to the Remedy and Reparations of the UN Resolution 60/147.

The legal status of the Community was established and protected by the Lausanne Treaty (24/7/1923). However, the Community suffered severe violations of its human rights since then. The numerous social, economic, educational and religious discriminations and deportation imposed illegally to the Community resulted to expatriation and therefore extreme shrinkage of its population. In Istanbul, the population went from almost one fifth of the City's whole population of the time to only 3,000 people of 12 million today.

The EFC, through its efforts in the last years, has succeeded to present these extensive violations to the Turkish authorities in multiple steps and to claim the first major remedy and reparations of the rights of the expatriated population and the Community, as follows:

- Restitution of the Turkish citizenship discarded unfairly in the past
- Facilitation of the repatriation procedures to those wishing to return to their homeland
- Allowance of the proper use and administration of the Community's and its welfare foundations real estate property
- Return of the confiscated archives and library of the Greek Literary Society of Istanbul (1861-1922), the Community's valuable memory
- Elimination of negative references in Turkish educational system for the minorities
- Acceptance of EU citizens -and not only Turkish citizens- to enrol at the Community's schools
- Recognition and application of equal rights to the Community as their Muslim Turkish co-citizens in all services and sectors of the State
- Recognition of the legal status of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and its rights of proper use of its institutions.

Mrs Expert on Minority Issues, despite the fact that the report submitted on the protection of minority rights is very important, one can ask whether in the absence of remedy and reparations, the institutionalized human rights protection becomes vague as the results of gross human violations become *fait accompli*, considering the irreversibility of the perpetrators planned acts towards a minority, such as the Greek-Orthodox of Istanbul that has been almost banished from its homeland.

Thank you for your attention.