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Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans

**The Imperative Necessity of the Remedy and Reparation towards the Greek Community
of Istanbul by the Republic of Turkey**

The case of autochthonous Greek-Orthodox Community of Istanbul, together with the Communities of the two Aegean islands Gokceada - Imbros and Bozcaada - Tenedos belonging to Turkey, is a typical case where the principles of Remedy and Reparations, as has been specified by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/147, is mostly applicable.

The legal status of these minority communities was established and placed under the protection of the International Treaty of Lausanne (24/7/1923). Even though the Treaty enabled the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, nevertheless the minority has experienced extensive violations of their human and religious rights during the period 1923-2003. The most severe violations were: (a) the mobilization to work battalions of 18-45 aged minority men in 1941, (b) the "welfare tax" of 1942-44 aiming the economic destruction of minorities, (c) the massive scale Pogrom of the 6-7 September 1955 in Istanbul, one of the most severe massive scale violence in post War Europe, (d) the forced deportation of members of Greek Community of Istanbul holding the Etablis status according to Lausanne Treaty.

Furthermore, the anti-minority state measures were strengthened in 1962 after the establishment of the "Special Minority Commission (Azinkiklar Taali Komisyonu)" with superseding powers of all executive, legislative and juristic authorities and which members being primarily of state security services until 2004. Recently, it was disclosed that each minority member citizen depending on its ethnical origin was coded with a specific number which was used to implement the discriminatory measures such as the: prohibitions of appointment to public service, registering to minority schools or not and restriction to property rights. All the above violations, despite the fact that the Republic of Turkey endorsed the European Convention of Human Rights as early as 1954.

As a result of this policy, the aforementioned communities are presently living in a state of expatriation to a very large percentage (98%). The total population of the Greek Community within Istanbul which was 125.000 in the year 1923 in total, presently is approximately 3.000. Until three years ago, the official position of Turkish state officials on the issue was that the members of the Greek Minority communities left their motherland because of "economic conditions" prevailing in Turkey at the time.

The last three years has seen a change of attitude by the Turkish authorities in their acceptance to negotiate with the Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans as the federative body of the above mentioned expatriated community. Although a noticeable progress has been achieved towards alleviating the existing problems of the expatriated community of Greeks of Istanbul, many generous and urgent steps are needed to be taken before someone can talk about remedy and reparations of the past gross violations. In this context the Federation has submitted last year to the Turkish authorities specific proposals including : (a) the restitution of citizenships, (b) the establishment of legal guidance service to

cope with the return of the private ownership to expatriated members of the Greek Community of Istanbul, (c) the implementation of an extended project aiming to support the young generation of Greeks of Istanbul to repatriate to their land of predecessors, (d) the establishment of research and development institutions in Istanbul with the support of expatriated scientists, (e) solution of pending problems of the Greek Community of Istanbul such as the return of the real estate properties to minority welfare foundations, financial support to their education institutions as is foreseen by Lausanne Treaty and never done.

Considering the severe depletion of the population of the Community because of the above-mentioned anti-minority measures, it is imperative that the Government of Republic of Turkey to expedite the proposed remedy and reparation measures towards the expatriated Greek Community of Istanbul. This requires the ongoing discussions between the Ec.Fe.Con and authorities of Republic of Turkey to be accelerated and work towards concrete results.