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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Written statement* submitted by Ecumenical Federation of Constantinopolitans, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[3 June 2019]

* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



The Right of the Greek-Orthodox Minority of Turkey to administer their Welfare Foundation by electing their Administrative Boards

The severe violations took place against the Greek Orthodox Community of Istanbul during the years 1923-2003 have been well documented and presented on several meetings of U.N. Minority Forums, Human Rights Meetings and other international organizations. The most visible consequence of these anti-minority measures against the Greek-Orthodox Minority of Istanbul, is the fact that 98% of the population of this Community is presently living under expatriated conditions in various countries in Europe, America and Australia.

The international status of the Greek-Orthodox minority of Turkey has been established by the Lausanne Treaty (L.T.) which is the founding Treaty of the Republic of Turkey (R.T.). However Turkey restricted the exercise of the minority rights only to the functioning of welfare foundations, with many restrictions and no other legal entity is recognized to minorities. The minority welfare foundations are the only entities recognized to have legal existence. Despite this and the clear clause of L.T. article...stating that the minorities will administer their welfare foundations, starting the year 2013 the General Directorate of Welfare Foundation (G.D.W.F.) claiming the argument the need of revision of election regulations, effectively prohibited the elections of members of the administration boards in the minority welfare foundations. This situation is causing severe problems to the administration of Foundations a fact that has been raised many times to authorities of Turkey. Furthermore on 13 March 2019 the G.D.W.F. through a circular encouraged the administration of minority welfare foundations to choose themselves members of the administration board in case of their absence (i.e. because of a death, resignations etc.). This measure prolongs the serious drawbacks caused by the prohibition of elections to minority welfare foundations and above all is in full contradiction with the laws of Turkey as well Lausanne Treaty. It should be emphasized that the most important Greek-Orthodox Foundation the Balikli Hospital and Elderly Care Foundation didn't made elections the last 28 years. Among the problems caused by the prohibition of elections are also economic transparency issues.

Taking into account the above facts urgently Turkey is called to take all necessary legal and administrative measures elections to be carried out at the minority welfare foundations with the full respect of democratic principles.
