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**SPECIFIC GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS: MASS
EXODUSES AND DISPLACED PERSONS**

**Latter dated 19 August 2003 from the Permanent Mission of Turkey
to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Acting
High Commissioner for Human Rights**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the observations of my Government on the report of the Representative of the Secretary-General on internally displaced persons, Mr. Francis Deng, concerning his visit to Turkey (E/CN.4/2003/86/Add.2).

I would appreciate it if you would have the enclosed observations* circulated as an official document of the sixtieth session of the Commission on Human Rights.

(Signed): Türkekul KURTTEKIN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* Reproduced in the annex as received, in the language of submission only.

Annex

**OBSERVATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF TURKEY
REGARDING THE REPORT OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
SECRETARY GENERAL ON INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS**

1. At the invitation of the Government of Turkey, Mr. Francis Deng, Representative of the Secretary General on internally displaced persons, visited Turkey from 26 May to 2 June 2002. The visit of Mr. Deng falls within the scope of a series of visits to Turkey by the thematic procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. Turkey is among the countries which have extended a standing invitation to the thematic procedures of the Commission on Human Rights and is committed to closely cooperating with these procedures. Mr. Deng's visit to Turkey was another example of such cooperation. Like other mandate holders who visited Turkey, he enjoyed full cooperation of the Turkish authorities. It is noted with satisfaction that Mr. Deng recognized the Government's contribution to the success of the visit and that the visit took place in an atmosphere of openness, transparency and cooperation.
2. Mr. Deng's report regarding his visit to Turkey (E/CN.4/2003/86/Add.2) has been carefully examined by the relevant Turkish authorities with a view to benefitting from its findings and conclusions. This document aims to outline the observations of the Turkish Government on the said report.
3. The root cause of internal displacement in Turkey has been the scourge of terrorism that Turkey has suffered for two decades. Large number of our citizens were compelled to leave their homes due to the terrorist organization PKK's intimidation, harassment and attacks. A small number of settlements had to be evacuated by the relevant authorities to ensure the safety of our people as a precaution. This being the case, it is indeed incorrect to portray the cause of displacement as the equal responsibility of the terrorist organisation and the authorities.
4. PKK (alias KADEK today) is a terrorist organization responsible for the death of over 30,000 Turkish citizens particularly in the south-east of Turkey. It is internationally labelled as such. Therefore, lack of reference to the PKK as a terrorist organisation in the report constitutes a serious shortcoming.
5. The Turkish Government attaches great importance to the successful return of our displaced citizens on a voluntary basis. In that regard, Back to Village and Rehabilitation Project has been launched with the purpose of enabling return and resettlement as well as the establishment of necessary

social and economic infrastructure and sustainable living standards. The ongoing efforts within the project also aim to increase the productivity capacity of the people as well as their education level. With this perception in mind, the project comprises measures to promote activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry and handicrafts. A campaign to promote education is stipulated under the coordination of governors.

6. The project aims not only to enable voluntary return to original settlements but also to create a more balanced and effective settlement pattern with a view to enabling a more rational and effective distribution of public investments and public services. To this end, centralization of settlements will be encouraged and supported. In that regard, one model village in every province covered by the project is chosen, areas for resettlement are identified, and their construction and development plans are prepared accordingly.

7. A significant dimension of the voluntary return process is to maintain the economic, social and cultural development in the region and to eradicate terrorism, which are interlinked. The state of emergency was completely lifted as of 30 November 2002. Maintaining the security situation in the region remains significant in the realisation of regional development and the voluntary return process.

8. Due to the complex and multi-dimensional nature of the process, close coordination and cooperation among various Ministries and public institutions as well as allocation of necessary financial resources is essential. The progress achieved so far has been positive and encouraging. In this regard, tens of thousands of people have returned to hundreds of villages and other rural settlements and necessary assistance has been provided to these people. The number of returnees from June 2000 to January 2003 is around 82 thousand. In spite of the budgetary restraints and serious economic difficulties, the Government continues to allocate increasing amount of resources for the effective implementation of the project. However, availability of resources remains to be the dominant factor affecting the pace of the realisation of the project.

9. Turkey will continue to take all feasible measures for the success of the voluntary return process and stands ready to maintain the ongoing cooperation with the Representative.