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COMISIÓN DE DERECHOS HUMANOS
61º período de sesiones
Tema 14 c) del programa

**GRUPOS E INDIVIDUOS ESPECÍFICOS: ÉXODOS EN MASA
Y PERSONAS DESPLAZADAS**

**Carta de fecha 5 de abril de 2005 dirigida a la Alta Comisionada para
los Derechos Humanos por la Misión Permanente de Turquía
ante la Oficina de las Naciones Unidas en Ginebra**

Tengo el honor de enviarle adjunta una nota sobre la cuestión de los desplazados internos en Turquía. Mucho agradecería que tuviese a bien distribuir la nota adjunta * como documento oficial del 61º período de sesiones de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos en relación con el tema 14 c) del programa.

(Firmado): Türkecul Kurttekin
Embajador
Representante Permanente

* Se reproduce en el anexo tal como se recibió, en el idioma original únicamente.

Annex

Information Note

Society for Threatened Peoples International, an NGO with consultative special status, has submitted a written statement (E/CN.4/2005/NGO/234) to the 61st session of the Commission on Human Rights which contains false information and unfounded allegations concerning the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Turkey.

The same NGO had already raised similar allegations during the 56th session of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights and an information note was then provided by the Turkish Permanent Mission to the OHCHR as an official document of the Sub-Commission (E/CN.4/Sub.2/2004/G/2) in order to bring clarification to and provide accurate information on the issue. The written statement this time to the 61st session of the Commission on Human Rights by the same NGO indicates that the Society for Threatened Peoples International is still void of the required goodwill and seriousness in addressing the subject of IDPs in Turkey. Therefore, in order to set the record straight, it is deemed necessary to provide once again the following observations and information:

1. The root cause of internal displacement in Turkey was the scourge of terrorism, from which Turkey suffered for two decades. While some settlements had to be evacuated by Turkish authorities as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of the people, a large number of Turkish citizens were compelled to leave their homes due to the intimidation and attacks of the terrorist organization PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party - also known with its subsequent names KADEK and KONGRA GEL). This terrorist organization, responsible for the murder of over 30,000 Turkish citizens, is included in the Terrorist Organizations list of the USA and the EU under its all three names, and as such is internationally labelled as a terrorist organization. Therefore, the reference in the statement to a “Turkish - Kurdish war” is totally incorrect and unacceptable. The fact that many victims of PKK terrorism were Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin suffices to show that such an attribution is totally wrong and deliberately misleading. The futile attempt to portray the legitimate fight against vicious terrorism as a “civil war” amounts to nothing less than condoning terrorism which should be condemned.
2. The number of people affected by the displacement is 353,978. Some sources, as is the case in the written statement by the above-referred NGO, take the liberty to ill-intentionally stretch this figure to millions. Turkey has repeatedly declared its readiness to discuss the source and accuracy of these claims.
3. The Turkish Government is addressing the issue of its citizens who were obliged to leave their villages with diligence. Significant progress has been made within “Return to Village and Rehabilitation Program” (RVRP) on which detailed information has been provided in the information note circulated by this Permanent Mission last year as a Sub-Commission document (E/CN.4/Sub.2/G/2). As of March 2005 131,645 people, amounting to one third of the persons displaced, have returned to their villages.

4. Turkey is working in close cooperation with the relevant international partners while crafting solutions to its IDPs issue. The previous Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs has already paid a visit to Turkey upon the invitation of the Turkish Government in May 2002. In his report the Representative acknowledged the Government's contribution to the success of his visit and that the visit took place in an atmosphere of openness, transparency and cooperation.

5. Benefiting from the recommendations of the Representative, Turkey is engaged in a dialogue and cooperation with the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Commission representatives in Turkey, as reflected in the recent UN Common Country Assessment.

Upon the proposal of the UN Country Team a new complimentary survey to enhance the planning process of the RVRP has been launched. The highly respected Institute of Population Studies at Hacettepe University, which has a long experience of cooperation with the UN and the EU, has initiated the survey in December 2004 and is planning to conclude the project by February 2006. The defined basic aim of the survey is the formulation of an academic estimate of the number of IDPs in Turkey in the past 20-year period, identification of problems, expectations and requests of the citizens who have already returned and who remained displaced. The results of this survey, which will constitute an important basis for the ongoing and future regional and rural development projects, will facilitate the implementation of the RVRP and will be shared with the UN, World Bank and the EU.

6. Mr. Walter Kälin, the newly appointed Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, has been invited to pay a working visit to Turkey to observe first-hand the latest developments concerning the IDPs. The visit is planned to take place in early May 2005.

7. As referred to in the written statement, the "Law on the Compensation of Losses Resulting From Terrorist Acts and the Measures Taken Against Terrorism" was adopted in July 2004. The Bylaw aimed at regulating its implementation was put into force in October 2004. The implementation is ongoing. Over 50.000 applications have already been lodged with the Committees which are established under the legislation. The Committees have started to produce decisions upon applications.

8. Claims of further displacement of villagers in the South East of Turkey during 2004 are groundless.

9. No discriminatory caveats have been placed upon returns as alleged in the written statement. Compilation of minimum 30 households at a place of return is required as a measure to make the economic and financial investments to the area of return economically feasible, sustainable and viable.

10. The deliberate allegations of obstruction by the village guards are unfounded. Turkish authorities act with determination against any individual cases which may occur. There have been no recruitments since 2000 to the village guard system, which was introduced in 1985 due to certain needs in the framework of combating terrorism. An acceptable and feasible policy,

taking into account all possible social and economic repercussions, for the gradual and successful resolution of the village guards issue is under study.

11. Turkey already became party to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty in March 2004. Mining activities within the borders of Turkey had ceased earlier in January 1998. Since then mine clearance activities have been underway. All mines laid down on Turkish territory are fenced and clearly marked in line with international standards. Nevertheless, countless mines and booby traps haphazardly laid down by the PKK terrorist organization, aiming at inflicting losses on security forces and intimidating the civilian population, do exist. When detected, such mines and booby traps are cleared by the security forces and destroyed in situ.

12. The Turkish Government is resolved to effectively address the issue of IDPs in Turkey in a spirit of cooperation with international organizations with transparency and goodwill, and will continue to take feasible measures for the success of the voluntary return process in line with relevant international standards.

13. Furthermore, the Turkish Government has initiated a new approach regarding the issue of the IDPs. The aim of this new concept is to enhance the activities pursued by the relevant Turkish authorities with regard to the IDPs on a more integrated basis.

In this context, an inter-agency commission, formed under the aegis of the Ministry of Interior this past February by instruction of the Prime Ministry, is now in the process of preparing an integrated strategy document on the issue. This document is to deal with every aspect of the IDP issue in Turkey along with RVRP implementation, and should supply operational guidance to national institutions on how to move forward as well as information for international fora.
