

April 20, 1992
Volume 4, Issue 6

GREECE: IMPROVEMENTS FOR TURKISH MINORITY; PROBLEMS REMAIN

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Introduction

The Greek government has taken significant steps to improve conditions for the Turkish minority¹ in Western Thrace during the past year. Ethnic Turks can now buy and sell houses and land, repair houses and mosques, obtain car, truck and tractor licenses, and open coffee houses and machine and electrical shops. None of these was possible in past years, as Helsinki Watch reported in *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece* in August 1990.

¹ The terms "Turkish minority," "Turkish community," "Moslem minority" and "ethnic Turks" are used interchangeably in this newsletter. All refer to Greek citizens of Turkish origin living in Western Thrace.

But the Turkish community reports that important problems remain, chiefly involving education; expropriation of land; the selection of muftis, the religious leaders of the Moslem minority; and control of the wakfs (charitable foundations). Moreover, the Greek government continued during 1991 to deprive hundreds of ethnic Turks of their Greek citizenship. In addition, police harassment of ethnic Turks continues, although to a lesser degree. Associations and schools still cannot call themselves "Turkish," Turkish language newspapers, books and magazines cannot be brought from Turkey into Western Thrace, and Turkish television is still jammed. Moreover, ethnic Turks are discriminated against in employment and in the provision of services.

Positive Steps by the Greek Government

In May 1991, Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis went to Western Thrace and announced plans to improve the situation of the Moslem minority. Acknowledging that "mistakes have been made in the past," the Prime minister vowed that the Greek government would:

- **respect the traditions of the Moslem minority, including Turks, Pomaks and Gypsies;**
- **assure equality before the law and equality in civic rights to all Greek citizens;**
- **provide the infrastructure necessary for Thrace to develop economically;**
- **improve educational opportunities for Moslem citizens by**
 - 1) **raising from a two-year to a four-year teacher's college the Special Pedagogic Academy in Thessaloniki that prepares teachers for Moslem children,**
 - 2) **providing the funds necessary to fill all vacancies in Moslem schools, and**
 - 3) **providing new school books to Moslem students.**

Prime Minister Mitsotakis followed this on October 18, 1991, with a statement to Parliament in which he declared that all administrative measures that had distinguished between Christian Greek citizens and Moslem Greek citizens had been abolished. He went on to state, "I declare categorically that any possible attempt at deviation [from this policy] on the part of lower administrators will be mercilessly crushed."

Members of the Turkish minority reported to a Helsinki Watch fact-finding mission in October 1991 that the government had, in fact, taken important steps to improve their lot. Dr. Sadik Ahmet, a surgeon who is a member of Parliament representing Komotini in Western Thrace, reported that two or three people in Komotini had received permission to build houses, and that one man in Iasmos had received permission to buy a house. In March 1992, ethnic Turks reported that they can now buy land.

Members of the Turkish community also reported that ethnic Turks can now obtain from the nomarchs' (prefects') offices drivers' licenses and tractor drivers' licenses without problems, a major new development. In addition, one new mosque had been built (in Simvolos village), and Turks had been permitted to repair three old mosques. However, they pointed out, permission to repair a mosque must still be obtained from the Christian religious leader in Komotini--Metropolitan Damaschinos.

In addition, ethnic Turks reported that they can now open coffee houses without difficulties, and can get permission to repair their houses. In March 1992, an ethnic Turk told Helsinki Watch that several members of the Turkish minority had been given permission to open machine and electrical shops.

Continuing Human Rights Problems of the Turkish Minority

Education

The Turkish minority reported to Helsinki Watch in October 1991 that the education problems reported in detail in *Destroying Ethnic Identity--the Turks of Greece* still exist. The three chief problem areas are textbooks, teachers, and not enough places in the Turkish secondary school for all of the Turkish elementary school graduates.

Textbooks

Dr. Sadik Ahmet, an independent member of Parliament representing Komotini, told Helsinki Watch that the Turkish students in elementary and secondary school are still using outdated schoolbooks in bad condition. Lawyer Adem Bekiroglu reported that according to the 1968 protocol between Greece and Turkey, Turkey is supposed to send schoolbooks at the beginning of the academic year. He said that the Turkish Embassy in Athens had announced that the Turkish government had, in fact, sent the books three months earlier, but that the Greek government had held them up.

Dionysus Karahalios, the nomarch of Komotini, confirmed the fact that the Turkish government had sent schoolbooks to Western Thrace at the end of the summer. But, he said, according to the 1968 Protocol, each country is entitled to see if the books contain material that would be harmful to relations between Greece and Turkey. He said that Ministry of Education officials were reading the textbooks and that he expected the books to be ready for distribution in February 1992. He also reported that Prime Minister Mitsotakis had said in May 1991 that the Ministry of Education would be told to produce its own books written in Turkish to be used in the minority schools. Ambassador Manolis Kalamidas of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Athens also told Helsinki Watch in October 1991 that the Greek government would produce new books in the Turkish language; he said that a Turkish grammar was currently being printed.

On March 3, 1992, Adem Bekiroglu told Helsinki Watch that no textbooks had yet arrived from Turkey, but that one Turkish language book, a primer for first graders, had been produced by the Greek government on February 18. He said that the Turkish minority had objected to the book, and that it was not in use.

Teachers

Dr. Sadik Ahmet told Helsinki Watch in October that the Turkish teachers who are supposed to be teaching the Turkish children in Western Thrace had not arrived yet from Turkey; the subjects that they were supposed to teach the children, including math, Turkish, physics, art and music, were not being taught at all. Greek teachers were teaching Greek, history, geography, Latin, ancient Greek, sociology, biology and the environment. The children were attending school only about three hours a day, taking half a program of studies.

Dr. Ahmet asserted that the Greek Embassy in Ankara had not given work permits to the Turkish teachers. Dr. Ahmet says that, according to the 1968 Protocol, teachers are to be brought from Turkey only if there are not enough teachers in Western Thrace who are capable of teaching the children in Turkish. He asserts that many members of the Turkish minority are qualified teachers who could fill the teaching vacancies immediately, but that the Greek government will not appoint them and will not give any reason for not doing so. The Turkish minority would pay the salaries of the teachers.

Lawyer Adem Bekiroglu told Helsinki Watch:

For school year 1990-1991, eight or ten teachers were supposed to be sent from Turkey, but only three came, and they did not come until January. This year nine teachers, all members of the Turkish community, applied to teach in the Turkish high school in Komotini, Celal Bayar High School; all are graduates of Turkish universities. But the Special Inspector for Minority Schools in Kavala, Dimos Kristalis, who works for the Ministry of Education, rejected the applications, saying that he was waiting for the Turkish teachers to arrive from Turkey.

Resit Salim, one of the teachers who applied to teach in Celal Bayar High School in 1991, told Helsinki Watch:

I am a 1977 graduate of Istanbul University's Faculty of Turkish Literature; I taught in Istanbul high schools for five years. I have been waiting for five years for an appointment to teach in the Western Thrace schools. A teacher of Turkish literature in the Turkish high school in Xanthi, Enver Kasapoglu, died recently, and I applied for his position. But Special Inspector Kristalis said that there was no empty place in the school.

Asked why the Turkish teachers had not arrived yet for academic year 1991-1992, Komotini Nomarch Dionysus Karahalios flatly contradicted the claims of the Turkish minority and told Helsinki Watch that there were no vacancies in the Komotini schools, and that, in fact, a full complement of Turkish teachers had arrived. This was confirmed by Mr. Dimitrios Paraskevopoulos, the Greek official responsible for Western Thrace, who told Helsinki Watch that he himself had seen the Turkish teachers teaching in Komotini schools this semester. When asked for the names of the teachers, Mr. Paraskevopoulos left the meeting room briefly, then returned and completely reversed his position. He then said that there had been a misunderstanding; that in fact the claims of the Turkish minority were correct—the Turkish teachers had not yet arrived. Mr. Paraskevopoulos went on to deny the Turkish claim that Inspector Kristalis had rejected applications from the Turkish minority for teaching positions.

On March 3, 1992, Adem Bekiroglu told Helsinki Watch that eighteen teachers had finally arrived from Turkey on March 2nd.

Secondary Schools

Ethnic Turks report that there are not enough places in the Turkish high schools for all of the Turkish elementary school graduates. Therefore, both Turkish secondary schools (one in Komotini and one in Xanthi) require entrance examinations in Turkish and in Greek; entrance examinations are not required for admission to Greek high schools. Dr. Sadik Ahmet, whose son attends Celal Bayar High School in Komotini, told Helsinki Watch that last year between 250 and 300 students applied for admission to Celal Bayar; only 64 or 65 were accepted. According to Dr. Ahmet,

Most of the rest of the students went to Turkey to study, although they could have attended the Greek high school. The Greek government likes the children to go to Turkey because most of them don't come back and often their families follow them eventually.

The Turkish community would like either to get permission to build a new secondary school that could accommodate all the eligible children or to receive approval to use empty space in the existing elementary school buildings. Dr. Ahmet believes that there is room in the Idadea school, for example, for as many as 200 more children.

Nomarch Karahalios told Helsinki Watch that the minority's request to eliminate entrance examinations for Turkish high schools was under consideration, and that a lottery could be substituted. He said that the Moslem minority had not requested permission to build another high school or to use empty elementary school space for high

school students.

Nomarch Gheorgios Kapatzoglu of Xanthi, on the other hand, told Helsinki Watch that the Ministry of Education was planning to introduce entrance examinations for all schools in Greece by the end of 1992.

Lawyer Adem Bekiroglu told Helsinki Watch that, according to a Protocol between Turkey and Greece signed on August 15, 1952, and Law No. 2203, which set up Celal Bayar High School, the director of the high school must be Turkish. The present director, however, is Greek; an ethnic Turk is the assistant director.

Helsinki Watch concludes that the Greek government has not provided adequate schoolbooks for Turkish students in Western Thrace, and has not provided the required Turkish language teachers for the full academic year. Nor has it provided sufficient secondary school places for Turkish students, which has meant that Turkish children must compete for the few places that exist; no such competition is required of children attending Greek secondary schools. These acts violate the Greek Constitution's guarantee of equality for all citizens, the Lausanne Treaty, the 1968 Protocol between Greece and Turkey, and minority protections established in the Paris Charter and subsequent documents issued by the Commission for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Land Expropriation

The Turkish minority in Western Thrace considers discrimination in land expropriation to be a significant problem. The Turks allege that the Greek government expropriates land from ethnic Turks at a significantly higher rate than from other Greek citizens and takes more fertile land (in what is largely a farming area) from Moslems than from Christians.

The Turkish community reports that the major issue at the moment is the government's plan to expropriate for an agricultural prison 16,000 acres, all but about 5 percent of which they say belongs to ethnic Turks. The land lies between Komotini and Sappes and includes four municipalities: Ariana, Philira, Arisvi and Aratos. The Turkish minority reports that 20,000 people earn their livelihood from this area—largely growing tobacco, as well as smaller amounts of cotton and corn. The minority alleges that the Greek village of Amfia was deliberately excluded from the area to be confiscated. The owners of the properties claim to have legal ownership documents, which they say they have tried to give to the nomarch, who would not accept them.

Nomarch Karahalios told Helsinki Watch that he did not know what percent of the land under consideration for the agricultural prison belonged to the Moslem minority. He said he did not know whether the village of Amfia had been deliberately excluded because it was a Christian village. He said that five hundred people had appealed the government's decision to expropriate the land, but that not all of them were land-owners, and not all had proper ownership documents.

In *Destroying Ethnic Identity—the Turks of Greece*, Helsinki Watch detailed the expropriation of land from ethnic Turks in Western Thrace. The Turkish community reports that when the government confiscated land, people who owned ten acres were allowed to keep their houses and five acres. That meant halving their income. The minority also alleges that the government takes fertile land from Moslems and infertile land from Christians.

Nomarch Karahalios flatly denied the accounts in *Destroying Ethnic Identity* and the assertions of the Turkish community; he said that no land had been expropriated from the Moslem minority. However, Helsinki Watch met with residents of Peleketi village who detailed the expropriation of hundreds of acres from their village since 1973, the latest of which took place in 1990.

On November 21, 1991, Nomarch Karahalios issued an official decree (Prot. No. 1538) announcing that authorities would expropriate 10,000 acres in the Komotini area for an open prison.

Helsinki Watch concludes that the Greek government has discriminated against the Moslem minority by expropriating proportionately more land from their members than from other Greek citizens.

Selection of Muftis

The Lausanne Treaty provides for free exercise of religion by the Turkish minority, which includes the selection of muftis, the community's religious leaders. In addition, Greek law No. 2345 of 1920 states that muftis must be elected by the Moslem people. And minority rights agreements issued by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) provide for religious freedom for members of minorities. The Paris Charter, for example, declares:

We affirm that the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of national minorities will be protected and that persons belonging to national minorities have the right freely to express, preserve and develop that identity without any discrimination and in full equality before the law.

The Report of the CSCE Meeting of Experts on National Minorities, issued in Geneva in July 1991, spelled out fundamental rights guaranteed to minorities, including the right to "establish and maintain their own educational, cultural and religious institutions, organizations and associations."

There are three muftis in Western Thrace, one each in Xanthi, Komotini and Evros. In 1985 the mufti in Komotini died. The Greek government appointed a new mufti—an acting mufti—without consulting the Moslem minority. The Moslem community reports that it had asked the government for some time to arrange an election for the mufti, but that the government had not responded.

Lawyer Adem Bekiroglu told Helsinki Watch:

Because the government wouldn't arrange an election for the mufti, we were forced to make our own election. We set a date for the election—December 28, 1990. Just before our election, on December 24th, the government (the cabinet) announced a new law—Law No. 1920—that said that muftis are to be appointed by the government for ten-year terms. In February the Parliament passed it. In accordance with the new law, the Nomarch of Xanthi appointed Mehmet Sinikoglu the new mufti, displacing Mufti Aga. The Nomarch of Komotini appointed Mufti Jamali as the new mufti, but the Turkish minority elected Ibrahim Serif the new mufti on December 28, 1990. Now there are two muftis in each community—one appointed by the government and one elected by the Moslem community.

Ibrahim Serif, the mufti elected by the Moslem community in Komotini, told Helsinki Watch that the appointed mufti is paid by the government, while he, Mr. Serif, is supported financially by the Moslem community. The appointed mufti, Mr. Jemali, performs official acts like marriages and divorces and acts as guardian for orphans. Mr. Serif cares for the spiritual needs of the community and aids the poor.

Mufti Jemali, the appointed mufti for Komotini, told Helsinki Watch that he had been first appointed as caretaker mufti in 1985. He believes that his appointment is correct, and is according to Islamic law:

Turkey has caused problems by saying that muftis should be elected and not appointed. Because of my appointment I am blacklisted by the government of Turkey and can no longer go to Turkey. I was told by the Turkish government that if I did not stop talking against Turkey, my son, who is studying in Turkey, would be expelled.

Many people are blacklisted by Turkey, and cannot travel there. Some of their names are:

- **Osman Bekiroglu, journalist for *Tune!***
- **Mehmetoglu Yasar, former M.P., head of the Komotini board of the Wakf**
- **Mustafa Imamoglu, secretary to the muftia**
- **Sinikoglu Faisal, who got a visa to study in Turkey, but whose visa was then annulled**
- **Ahmet Mehmet, former M.P. of the Socialist Party**
- **Hasan Ahmet**
- **Abdurhalim Dede, journalist**
- **Ibrahim Onsunoglu, medical doctor**
- **Salih Halil of *Ileri* newspaper**

I believe that May 14, 1991, the day that Prime Minister Mitsotakis came to Western Thrace, was a historic day. I believe that his visit started a state of equality before the law for all Greek citizens. Seventy-five percent of equality is now being implemented; if the problems of the schools were solved, we would have 100 percent equality. That is the only remaining problem.

Moslem doctors work in hospitals and treat Christians, Christian doctors treat Moslems. In court, Moslems and Christians are not separated. Moslems have the same social insurance as other Greeks. There are 200 mosques in the Rodopi prefecture, and 350 in all of Western Thrace. I am a religious leader, not a politician.

Mufti Sinikoglu, the appointed mufti of Xanthi, told Helsinki Watch that the problems of the Moslems in Western Thrace were being resolved since the May 14 appearance of Prime Minister Mitsotakis. "I take seriously the Prime Minister's words about equality," he said. He confirmed the statements of other ethnic Turks that permission had been granted since May for the repair of mosques, and cited mosques in Karakujali (in Komotini) and Halikcilar (in Xanthi) as examples. He believes that his election took place according to law. He, too, believes that he has been blacklisted by the Turkish government; he says he has been denied a visa by the Turkish consul on at least twenty occasions.

Helsinki Watch concludes that the Greek government has denied to the Turkish minority in Western Thrace its rights to religious freedom and to control its religious institutions in violation of the Treaty of Lausanne and minority rights protections of the Paris Charter and the CSCF's Geneva 1991 Report on National Minorities. Helsinki Watch also concludes that the Turkish government has denied to some ethnic Turks the right to travel to Turkey.

Demonstration Against the New Law for the Selection of Muftis

On Saturday, August 23, 1991, the Turkish community held a demonstration in Xanthi to protest the new law governing the selection of muftis. Ethnic Turks told Helsinki Watch that the demonstration began at 11:00 a.m. and lasted until 3:00 a.m. the following morning. They reported that about eight or nine hundred ethnic Turks sat down in the street in front of the mufti's building and announced that they had asked the government to accept the mufti elected by the people. Mufti Aga, the elected mufti, and both Turkish members of parliament from Western Thrace, Dr. Sadik Ahmet and Mr. Ahmet Faikoglu, took part in the demonstration.

According to Adem Bekiroglu, who also took part:

About eighty or one hundred Greek terrorists began to yell insults at us; many police were nearby. Everything was peaceful until about 1:30 a.m., when some Greeks started throwing

stones and beating people with their hands and with wooden sticks and kicking them. Fifteen Turks were injured, with cuts and bruises; several went to the hospital and stayed there for a few hours. Only about two hundred Turks were still there at the time—about 800 had stayed until midnight. The police did nothing to stop the Greeks from throwing stones or coming forward to hit or kick us. Every five or ten minutes between 1:30 and 3:00, someone would throw a stone. None of the Turks threw stones back or tried to hit the Greeks. We had lots of bottles, and could have thrown them at the Greeks, but we didn't. At about 3:00 Ahmet Faikoglu ended the demonstration. There had been about twelve police officers on one side of the demonstration and another twenty on the other side. Some of them told the Greeks to stop, but then they just moved out of the way when the crowd was attacked.

All of the mosques in Xanthi were closed for one month as a protest against the new law and the government's failure to protect the Turkish community during the demonstration.

Mr. Bekiroglu's account was confirmed by Dr. Sadik Ahmet, by other Turks in Xanthi who had taken part, and by 33-year-old sailor Abdulkadir Aynur, who was injured during the demonstration. Mr. Aynur told Helsinki Watch:

I was at the demonstration for a while late in the afternoon. Then I left and came back at 1:00 a.m. and stayed until 3:00. The Greeks were yelling at us, "Go to Turkey—don't stay here." There were more than 100 of them in front of us, on the same street, about twenty meters from us. First they just yelled at us, and then they started throwing stones and sometimes bottles. I was hit on the back of the head and the front of the head [he showed Helsinki Watch two scars]. They were singing the national march of Greece when they attacked us, beating people with sticks. We just sat there. Sadik Ahmet told us not to throw anything back.

I went to the hospital with my uncle. Four or five Greeks were outside the hospital; they beat my uncle and a friend of mine. I was home sick for ten days. The Greeks broke windows of eight or ten Turkish shops, too.

Virginia Tsouderos, Greek Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, told Helsinki Watch that the demonstration had consisted of three to five hundred people and that the government had ordered that the Turks be allowed to demonstrate.

That night there was a big concert in Xanthi that ended at about 2:30 a.m. Six hot-headed youngsters on motorcycles went around the Moslems and started insulting them. Police took the troublemakers away and issued orders to protect the sit-down strikers. They got four of the troublemakers, but two got away. By 3:00 a.m. it was all over.

Asked about the demonstration, Nomarch Kapatzoglu of Xanthi told Helsinki Watch:

There were no acts of violence during the demonstration. I was not there myself, but I was told that there were injured people at the hospital, so I went there. But I only found one Moslem who had been injured in a motorcycle accident. No stones were thrown, and there were no injuries at the demonstration. Forty or fifty police were assigned to monitor the demonstration; we were afraid of provocation from either the Moslems or the Greeks.

When told of the account related by his superior, Undersecretary Tsouderos, Nomarch Kapatzoglu said that

four people had been arrested for "going toward the Moslems—the police intercepted them."

Helsinki Watch was shown several photos taken during the demonstration that showed ethnic Turks with blood on their faces and clothes.

Helsinki Watch concludes that Xanthi police failed to protect ethnic Turks who were carrying out a peaceful demonstration on the streets outside the mufti's office in Xanthi on August 23, 1991.

Control of the Wakfs (Charitable Foundations)

The Lausanne Treaty provides that minorities shall have the right to control their charitable institutions. CSCE documents, including the Paris Charter and the 1991 Geneva Report on the Meeting of Experts on National Minorities, provide that minorities shall have the right to establish, maintain and control their educational, cultural and religious institutions, organizations and associations.

Wakfs are charitable trusts, or religious endowments. According to the Moslem community, the directors of the wakfs were elected by the community before the military junta came to power in 1967. Then, in 1980, law no. 1091 was passed. This law called for wakfs to be administered by a board of five administrators to be selected by the nomarch, who also had the power to approve the wakfs' budgets. According to ethnic Turks, Law No. 1920, passed in February 1991, says nothing about the administration of the wakfs. However, they charge that the muftis appointed by the government are now technically administering the wakfs; the real administrators, they allege, are the nomarchs. Elected Mufti Ibrahim Serif of Komotini told Helsinki Watch:

The wakfs are religious endowments made up by gifts from the people. Their purposes are religious. If the nomarchs are involved, it means they are involved in the religious problems and practices of the community. It is against the Moslem religion for non-Moslems to control wakfs. So now no one is giving property to the wakfs. This is a very serious problem, because we need money for schools, mosques and other buildings, as well as for giving aid to the poor.

Helsinki Watch concludes that the Moslem minority in Western Thrace has been denied its right to control and manage its charitable institutions, in violation of the Lausanne Treaty and international agreements concerning minority rights, including the Paris Charter and the CSCE 1991 Geneva Report on Minorities.

Deprivation of Citizenship

Article 19 of the Greek Nationality Law (No. 3370 of 1955) provides that:

A person of non-Greek ethnic origin leaving Greece without the intention of returning may be declared as having lost Greek nationality. This also applies to a person of non-Greek ethnic origin born and domiciled abroad. His minor children living abroad may be declared as having lost Greek nationality if both their parents or the surviving parent have lost the same. The Minister of the Interior decides in these matters with the concurring opinion of the National Council.

Helsinki Watch concluded in its 1990 report, *Destroying Ethnic Identity: the Turks of Greece*, that this law violates two provisions of the Greek Constitution: Article 4.1, which provides that all Greeks are equal before the law, and Article 4.2, which says that "withdrawal of Greek citizenship shall be permitted only in case of voluntary acquisition of another citizenship or of undertaking service contrary to national interests in a foreign country."

We found that Article 19 also violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which provides in Article 12(4) that "No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country," as well as the Concluding Document of the Vienna Follow-up Meeting to the CSCE signed in January 1989, which provides that states will respect the right of everyone to leave his own country and return to it.

Helsinki Watch has found that the Greek government continues to take away the citizenship of members of the Turkish minority in spite of the protections of international law. The United States Department of State's 1991 Country Report for Greece, issued on January 31, 1992, reports that the Greek government announced in December 1991 that 628 persons had lost citizenship under Article 19 during the preceding year. Helsinki Watch has received information on 544 of the 628.

On February 8 and February 26, 1991, the Ministry of the Interior deprived 544 ethnic Turks of their Greek citizenship. None of the 544 was given an opportunity to challenge these acts, to examine witnesses against them, or to provide their own witnesses. According to members of the Turkish minority, most of these people are working in Western European countries, in Turkey, Australia or elsewhere, but have not abandoned their Greek citizenship and, in fact, intend to return to Greece. Dr. Sadik Ahmet reports that some of those whose citizenship was taken were actually living in Greece, serving in the Greek army or navy, or were students studying outside of Greece.

The Turkish community provided Helsinki Watch with a list of the 544 people, along with xeroxed copies of the passports of sixty-three of them who report that they are, in fact, currently living in Greece.

People whose citizenship is taken away under Article 19 can appeal administratively to the Minister of the Interior, to the Greek Council of State, or to the Council of Europe. Members of the Turkish community told Helsinki Watch that appeals are extremely expensive and time-consuming. According to the U.S. State Department's 1991 Country Report, the Foreign Ministry reported that there were 39 administrative appeals in 1991: two were successful, 21 were unsuccessful, and 16 were pending in December 1991. The Ministry also reported that there were two or three appeals a month to the Council of State, most of which were successful, and that no appeals were made to the Council of Europe during 1991.

Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras told Helsinki Watch in October 1991 that a special commission is working on the citizenship law, and that Article 19 would be reconsidered and most likely abolished. Prime Minister Mitsotakis was quoted in the Turkish newspaper *Hurriyetas* saying that Article 19 would be abolished. At this writing, the article is still in effect.

Citizenship problems are manifested in other ways. For example, lawyer Adem Bekiroglu told Helsinki Watch:

Minister of the Interior George Doganis signed an order on February 1, 1988 (File #EP 133/5-1-1988) that said that if one person in a family loses Greek nationality, no one else in the family can obtain any legal papers or documents concerning their citizenship. So no one can file papers to inherit property. I've handled fifteen cases since 1988 as a lawyer; I've managed to get documents for clients in about ten of those cases. But people without lawyers can't get them.

Helsinki Watch concludes that the Greek government continues to deprive ethnic Turks of their citizenship in violation of international laws and agreements to which the Greek government is a party.

Police Harassment

Helsinki Watch reported in 1990 that the Turkish minority in Western Thrace was experiencing harassment at

the hands of Greek police in spite of the European Convention for Human Rights' and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights' guarantees of freedom from inhuman or degrading treatment.

In October 1991, Helsinki Watch found that police harassment of the Turkish minority has lessened, but still exists:

- Imam Ahmet Haciosman told Helsinki Watch that on October 21, 1991, he was called in by police in Komotini and questioned for half an hour about why he had met in Thessaloniki with a foreigner in a car with Yugoslav license plates, and whether he was collaborating with Yugoslavs. Mr. Haciosman reports that he told police that he had not been in Thessaloniki during the time period in question, and had not met with anyone from Yugoslavia. He reports that police showed him a dossier they were keeping on him.
- Helsinki Watch was told that in early October 1991, Asim Chavusoglu, the president of the teachers' union, was called in by police and told that he should not attend any meetings about minority problems.
- Elected mufti Ibrahim Serif told Helsinki Watch that after his election by the Moslem minority he had been called in by police and asked why he was claiming to be the elected mufti. He reports that police told him not to attend ceremonies as mufti, and not to call himself a mufti. He says that police asked him to make a statement saying he was not the mufti and acknowledging the appointed mufti instead, but that he refused.
- Members of the Turkish community told Helsinki Watch that they are sometimes followed by police. The Helsinki Watch October mission was openly followed by police in unmarked cars in Komotini, but not, as far as it could tell, in Xanthi.

Helsinki Watch concludes that police harassment of members of the Turkish community continues in violation of international laws and agreements, but that the incidence has lessened.

Free Expression

In *Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Turks of Greece*, Helsinki Watch reported that the Greek government frequently violated ethnic Turks' right to free expression. The Turkish community reports that several small news sheets are still published by the Turkish community in Western Thrace. Dr. Sadik Ahmet, whose newspaper, *Güven*, was charged in January 1990 with creating discord between Christians and Moslems, and whose case is still pending, told Helsinki Watch, "Newspapers still can't say bad things about the government; we're sure they would get in trouble."

Ethnic Turks told Helsinki Watch that Turkish books and newspapers, although available in Athens and Thessaloniki, are not permitted in Western Thrace. In addition, they report that television broadcasts from Turkey continue to be jammed in parts of Western Thrace.

In another violation of free expression rights, a press conference to be held on January 29, 1992, by the Minority Rights Group/Greek Section was banned by the Greek Press Association. The press conference was scheduled to present the Greek Section's report, *Minorities in Greece and the Political World*. The president of the press association gave as a reason for the ban that the report makes reference to "non-officially recognized minorities." The report covers various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, including Moslems in Western Thrace, Slavomacedonians, Gypsies, Jews, Vlachs, Arvanites and Chamis.

The banning was denounced by members of Parliament, including MP George Papandreou, who suggested that the Greek government was responsible for the banning. *The Financial Times* reported on February 2, 1992, that the government was believed to be responsible for the ban.

Denial of Ethnic Identity

As Helsinki Watch reported in 1990, it is illegal in Greece for a Turkish association to be called "Turkish." In 1988, the Union of Turkish Associations of Western Thrace was ordered closed by the Greek Supreme Court because of the word "Turkish" in its name. Helsinki Watch found that this practice continues today.

On April 25 and 26, 1991, the Rodopi Court of First Instance ordered the closing of both the Komotini Turkish Youth Association and the Western Thrace Turkish Teachers' Association (both founded in the 1930s) because of the word "Turkish" in their titles. According to the decisions:

The association creates the impression that it is a Turkish association. The word "Turkish" refers not to those of other ethnic origin, religion or language, but specifically to the citizens of a foreign country. Therefore, the functions of the aforementioned association ... became illegal and a threat to the public order.

Helsinki Watch concludes that the Greek government continues to deny the ethnic identity of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace.

Discrimination in Employment

Ethnic Turks continue to have difficulties in employment—in both self-employment and employment by others.

Ethnic Turks with technical training and degrees are sometimes unable to start businesses, although other Greek citizens, the Turkish minority reports, are able to get permission without difficulty. Yuksel Nuryolu, for example, a pharmacist whose case Helsinki Watch described in 1990, has still been unable to open a pharmacy. Nomarch Karahalios told Helsinki Watch that Mr. Nuryolu had not received permission because he had not yet submitted his university diploma. Interviewed in Xanthi, Mr. Nuryolu denied this, and told Helsinki Watch that he had submitted his diploma to the nomarch's office a long time ago.

In the late spring of 1991, ethnic Turks were for the first time permitted to take a technical exam that is given by the nomarch of Komotini several times a year. To pass the exam means to be able to open machine and electrical shops. Eight ethnic Turks took the exam and were reportedly told by the nomarch that they had passed. Helsinki Watch learned in March 1992 that several of these men had been permitted to open machine or electrical shops.

As for civil service appointments, the Turkish community reports that no change has occurred: they report that many Turks have applied for such jobs, but that of the between 500 and 600 employees in the Komotini nomarch's office, only six or seven are held by ethnic Turks. Five or six of these reportedly work as street cleaners, and one works in the water department.

Asked the reasons for this small number, Nomarch Karahalios told Helsinki Watch that he did not know the number of Moslems who work in his office. He said that the last exam for jobs in his office had been given in September 1990:

Nine hundred fifty people applied for fifty positions. None of them were Moslems. Moslems are not interested in those jobs, because they don't feel secure with their knowledge of the

Greek language. In the mayor's office we don't have Moslems as civil servants. Some are employed as seasonal workers in forestry and fire services, mostly in the mountainous areas.

Helsinki Watch concludes that ethnic Turks are discriminated against in employment in violation of international agreements that forbid such discrimination, including the Treaty of Lausanne, the European Convention on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and documents issued by the CSCE.

Discrimination in Services

Residents of Peleketi village on the outskirts of Komotini, which is inhabited almost entirely by members of the Turkish minority, told Helsinki Watch that the Greek government discriminates against the Turkish minority in the provision of services. In Peleketi, for example, they reported that there is only one telephone for 250 families, while in the nearby Greek village of Amaksades, all 60 Greek families have telephones. Ethnic Turks reported that they had been trying for twenty years to get telephones. Dr. Adem Haji, a practicing physician, told Helsinki Watch that he has no telephone, and has been trying to get one for between five and six years. Nomarch Kapatzoglu of Xanthi told Helsinki Watch that by next year there would be a surplus of telephones.

Helsinki Watch concludes that ethnic Turks in Western Thrace are discriminated against in the provision of services in violation of international agreements referred to earlier that forbid such discrimination.

Recommendations

Helsinki Watch concludes that while there have been significant improvements in the situation of the Turkish minority in Western Thrace, important problems remain. As it did in 1990, Helsinki Watch recommends that the Greek government abide by its obligations under international and national law to protect the Turkish minority's human rights; specifically, to:

- **Acknowledge the existence of the Turkish minority and grant them all the civil and political rights enjoyed by other Greek citizens; this should include the right to call themselves and their associations and schools "Turkish;"**
- **Accord the Turkish minority the freedom to leave Greece and return, without the threat of deprivation of citizenship;**
- **Continue recent steps to guarantee the Turkish minority equal rights, in policy and practice, to buy and sell land and houses, to build, enlarge and repair houses, and to repair mosques;**
- **Guarantee the Turkish minority equal rights to business and professional life and equal access to civil service employment;**
- **Accord the Turkish minority freedom of expression, including access to radio, television and publications from Turkey; end the harassment of the Turkish minority press;**
- **Enforce international agreements forbidding degrading treatment of the Turkish minority, including harassment by Greek authorities;**
- **Provide the Turkish minority with freedom of religion, including the selection of muftis and the control of religious endowments;**
- **Permit the Turkish minority to build new mosques;**

- **Accord the Turkish minority the right to control its schools, including the right to build, enlarge and repair schools, to appoint its Turkish language teachers, and to obtain and use current schoolbooks in the Turkish language.**

Helsinki Watch recommends that the United States government acknowledge and condemn the human rights abuses documented in this newsletter, and use its best efforts to persuade the government of Greece to carry out the recommendations listed above.

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This newsletter was written by Lois Whitman, the Deputy Director of Helsinki Watch. News From Helsinki Watch is a publication of Helsinki Watch, an independent organization created in 1978 to monitor domestic and international compliance with the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. The Chair is Robert L. Bernstein; Vice Chairs, Jonathan Fanton and Alice H. Henkin; Executive Director, Jeri Laber; Deputy Director, Lois Whitman; Washington Representative, Catherine Cosman; Staff Counsel, Holly Cartner; Research Associates, Ivana Nizich and Rachel Denber; Associates, Sarai Brachman, Pamela Cox, and Elisabeth Socolow.

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