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REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE
STRENGTHENING OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING OF GOOD-NEIGHBOURLINESS
BETWEEN STATES

Letter dated 24 February 1986 from the Permanent Representative of
Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

With reference to the letter addressed to you by the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations (A/41/167) and upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to request you to have the enclosed statement of the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, given in reply to a question regarding the declaration of the Bulgarian Telegraph Agency (BTA) on the plight of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under items 71, 92, 97 and 137 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Ilter TURKMEN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/41/50.

ANNEX

Statement of the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of Turkey

The official Bulgarian news agency, BTA, in a "Declaration" issued under the instructions of the Bulgarian Government, has denied the campaign of violence, oppression and assimilation directed against the Turkish Muslim minority in that country. In an effort to deceive world public opinion, the BTA has disregarded the contractual obligations assumed by Bulgaria under bilateral and multilateral agreements that guarantee the status and the rights of this minority, and had the frivolity to accuse the Turkish Government of interfering in the internal affairs of Bulgaria and initiating a campaign of defamation against that country.

The changing of Turkish names by coercion, the demolition of mosques and other acts of violence and murder, which have all been characterized as "lies and falsifications" by the BTA, are not questions brought up by Turkey alone, but facts confirmed also by foreign diplomatic sources and international institutions dealing with human rights.

Despite the facts exposed by objective observers and the existence of agreements that guarantee the status and the rights of the Turkish Muslim minority in Bulgaria, attempting to conceal the subjection of a minority of 1.5 million people to violence and oppression and cultural genocide at the end of the twentieth century is nothing but making a mockery of the intellect and common sense of world public opinion.

The absurd assertion of the Bulgarian authorities about a sudden volition on the part of the Turkish Muslim minority for the Bulgarization of their names, which are the symbols of their religious and cultural heritage, can hardly convince anyone at all. The fact that the regions populated by the Turkish Muslim minority have been meticulously sealed and closed off to the international press, observers and representatives of international institutions for one and a half years is the greatest testimony that even Bulgarian authorities themselves are not convinced by this absurd assertion.

World public opinion is aware that the requests of the representatives of international institutions dealing with human rights and of the members of the international press to travel to those regions where acts of violence and oppression are known to have taken place have either been rejected or left unreplied.

The Bulgarian authorities, who have the audacity to accuse the Turkish Government of chauvinistic nationalism, have mobilized Bulgarian scientific institutions to undertake research that is reminiscent of horrible Nazi theories of a superior race, involving the exhumation of tombs in order to study human bones and skulls with the purpose of proving a weird theory that purports that everyone living in Bulgaria is of pure Bulgarian race.

The world knows that the Turkish Government does not have a pan-Turkish policy. The Bulgarian Government, however, after having assimilated the other ethnic groups in the country, seems to be inclining towards certain expansionist practices to realize its dream of a "greater Bulgaria" and towards various irrational theories. A glance at the Bulgarian press is sufficient in this regard.

Turkey is faithful to the 1975 Declaration on Good-neighbourliness, mentioned in the Bulgarian Government's declaration, and all other legal instruments signed by Turkey. On this occasion, it would be appropriate to request the Bulgarian Government to read carefully the 1975 Declaration and its first operative part, in particular, and to act accordingly in practice.

As to the great indignation of the international community that is a cause of deep concern for the Bulgarian Government, this indignation is a sincere expression of respect for human life felt by the civilized world in the face of racist and Fascist practices that prohibit a minority of 1.5 million people from using the names of their ancestors, speaking their native tongue, fulfilling their religious obligations and even to communicating with their relatives outside Bulgaria.

Turkey has always been desirous of developing its relations with all countries and its neighbours in particular, regardless of their political and social régimes. In this context, during the period when Bulgaria did not crudely violate its contractual obligations against the Turkish Muslim minority in its country, Turkey has diversified its relations with Bulgaria and has brought them to a certain level. Turkey sincerely desires further to promote and develop these relations in a manner that would be mutually beneficial to the peoples of the two countries and believes that there are possibilities in this regard. But the only prerequisite for this is that Bulgaria should prove before world public opinion that it is meticulously observing the minority rights and the status of the Turkish Muslim minority in Bulgaria, as guaranteed by bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Turkey reminds Bulgaria once more of the Turkish proposal conveyed to the Bulgarian Government at the beginning of these events, and repeated on various occasions afterwards, for holding bilateral discussions on all questions between the two countries, including the basic question of the situation of the Turkish Muslim minority and the problem of emigration, and wishes that Bulgaria rescind its racist practices that have gravely tarnished its régime and adopt a realistic attitude.
