



General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/44/346
26 June 1989

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Forty-fourth session
Items 101 and 107 of the preliminary list*

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Letter dated 23 June 1989 from the Permanent Representative of
Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to submit, enclosed herewith, the text of the statement made on 22 June 1989 by the spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Ambassador Inal Batu, on the subject of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria (see annex).

I shall be grateful if you would kindly have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under items 101 and 107 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Mustafa AKSIN
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/44/50/Rev.1.

SECRET
CONFIDENTIAL

ANNEX

Statement made on 22 June 1989 by the spokesman of the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey

The tragedy of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria remains on the international agenda as an important question that requires an urgent solution. We would like to stress the need to maintain our guard against any attempt to divert attention or confuse the issue.

For reasons that we are still unable to understand, the Bulgarian Administration has, in complete violation of its treaty obligations, launched an inhuman campaign to assimilate a Turkish minority numbering in excess of 1.5 million souls. Since this campaign became apparent in 1984, Turkey has reacted strongly to this anachronistic policy and has clearly stated its position based on the following principles:

(1) The Bulgarian Government must abide by its internal legislation and its bilateral commitments relating to the human and minority rights of these loyal Bulgarian citizens and must restore all the rights that have been denied to our kinsmen;

(2) Without prejudice to this principle, the Government of Turkey is prepared to receive all the people belonging to the Turkish minority who may wish to emigrate, and, to this end, it is prepared to negotiate a comprehensive emigration agreement with Bulgaria.

It will be recalled that, for a long time, the Bulgarian Government rejected our appeals; however, as it became increasingly apparent that this grave violation of human rights was giving rise to adverse reactions from the international community, it felt compelled to change its course. Thus, when the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the two countries met at Belgrade on the occasion of the Balkan meeting, a protocol was signed on 23 February 1988 that started a negotiating process. This gave rise to hopes that, through this process, the ordeal of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria would come to an end.

Turkey engaged in this dialogue with the best of intentions in the belief that it would lead to the solution of this humanitarian problem and also to the complete revival of Turkish-Bulgarian relations which, because of Bulgaria's cruel policies of oppression, were close to the breaking point.

Unfortunately, it became apparent at the first meeting that Bulgaria had no intention of discussing this matter which was at the very basis of the Belgrade Protocol and that it wanted to use this negotiating process merely to remove from the international agenda this human tragedy that was attracting the sensitivity and anxiety of world public opinion. The dialogue that Turkey had entered into with good will and high hopes came to an end after the second meeting when it became obvious that it was leading nowhere.

The inhuman assimilation campaign conducted against Bulgaria's Turkish minority has continued to acquire new dimensions and intensity. There has also been a corresponding international reaction to this campaign.

In the mean time, the Bulgarian Government kept up its manoeuvres aimed at misleading the world, and, in this context, brought amendments to its passport and citizenship laws. It did this on the eve of the Human Dimension Meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) with the aim of deflecting the criticism that it felt was coming in its direction. These measures were not taken to grant Bulgarian citizens the freedoms corresponding to contemporary norms; they were designed to provide a basis for the policy of expulsion that the Bulgarian Government was preparing to implement against the Turkish minority resisting assimilation. We have the evidence of Bulgaria's intentions from the thousands of our kinsmen who have been crossing into Turkey in recent weeks.

It is because the Bulgarian Government persists in its anachronistic campaign and appears determined to continue to flout humanity that it has attracted the greatest and severest criticism at the Human Dimension Meeting of the CSCE. Bulgaria did not have the backing of a single country at that meeting.

Turkey's constructive and consistent policy vis-à-vis the Turkish minority's condition in Bulgaria has been reiterated in recent weeks by statements made at the highest levels. We are confronted with an humanitarian problem that calls for an urgent and comprehensive solution. The problem has been compounded and made more worrisome by the policy of mass expulsions.

Turkey has indicated its readiness to enter into negotiations with a view to solving this problem and reaching a comprehensive agreement between the two countries for regulating the emigration. But it is important to bear in mind that no negotiation can take place in a vacuum. Every negotiation does and must have a concrete basis and clear purpose.

Consequently, if the Bulgarian Prime Minister's statement is an indication that Bulgaria has now decided to abandon its negative posture of recent years and is ready to enter into a comprehensive emigration agreement, we would hope and expect that this be stated unambiguously.

Given the heavy responsibility that mankind is confronted with, owing to the tragedy of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria, Turkey cannot afford to lose time with a new round of negotiations similar to the previous ones carried out within the framework of the Belgrade Protocol.

As with all neighbouring countries, Turkey and Bulgaria also have problems that have to be solved through negotiations. The question of the border at Mutludere and the determination of the lateral boundary of the territorial waters of the two countries are such bilateral questions. It is natural that there be such questions and one can expect others to come up in the future; if tackled with good will, we believe that they can be solved without difficulty. It is in this spirit that we have informed the Bulgarian side that we are ready and willing to negotiate these questions. But such questions cannot, of course, be equated or

related to the tragedy of the Turkish minority in Bulgaria which, in its nature and scope, is of extreme seriousness and requires immediate attention. Each question must be dealt with in its own context, realities must not be distorted and attempts to confuse issues by irrelevant linkages must be desisted from.
