

TEXT OF E-DEAR COLLEAGUE FROM REPS. ED ROYCE AND HOWARD BERMAN

From: **Heng, Elizabeth** (office of Rep. Ed Royce)

Date: Mon, Jun 6, 2011 at 12:29 PM

Subject: Original Co-Sponsor: Urging Turkey to safeguard its Christian heritage and to return confiscated church properties

To:

Dear Colleague,

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom has identified the Republic of Turkey as one of the world's leading violators of religious freedom. Christians constitute less than one percent of Turkey's population, placing them in an especially vulnerable position. Although Turkey considers itself a secular democracy, regulations imposed on minority religious groups, in particular Christians, deny religious equality.

By expropriating church properties, harassing worshippers, and refusing to grant full legal status to some Christian groups, the Republic of Turkey has failed to fulfill its obligation as a signatory to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which requires "freedom of thought, conscience, and religion."

This resolution "Urging the Republic of Turkey to Safeguard its Christian Heritage and to Return Confiscated Church Properties" calls upon the government of Turkey to end religious discrimination, cease all restrictions on gatherings for religious prayer and education, and return stolen church property.

To be an original cosponsor, please contact Elizabeth Heng in Rep. Ed Royce's office at Elizabeth.Heng@mail.house.gov or Mina Garcia with the Democratic Staff of the Foreign Affairs Committee at Guillermina.Garcia@mail.house.gov.

EDWARD R. ROYCE
Member of Congress

HOWARD L. BERMAN
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