

**COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION
IN EUROPE**

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February 15, 2006

His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan
Prime Minister
Republic of Turkey
Washington, DC

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Today tens of thousands of internally-displaced Turkish citizens continue to face obstacles to their return home due to limitations on their freedom of movement, lack of resources, and the omnipresent village guard system (both paid and voluntary). We urge you to seek further improvement in the status of Turkey's internally-displaced persons.

The "Law on the Compensation of Losses Resulting from Terrorist Acts and the Measures Taken Against Terrorism" (Law 5233) enacted by your government constitutes an important step toward reparation for the IDPs who have suffered loss or damage. Extending to July 27, 2006 the one-year deadline for filing applications under this law was also positive.

We have noted the European Court of Human Rights recently redirected to the commissions formed under Law 5233 all Turkish claimants seeking compensation for losses sustained during the internal conflict. The decision makes the successful implementation of the compensation process even more critical. We are therefore especially concerned with the composition of these commissions, their resources and decision-making process. In addition, the temporal limitations on applicants, the favoring of village guards, the failure of the Compensation Law to use the internationally accepted definition of an IDP, and the lack of coordination with domestic NGOs to raise awareness among IDPs about the process, all create real concern. The recommendations issued by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundations (TESEV) on these matters offer further suggestions.

Mr. Prime Minister, while we commend the reforms your government has made to address IDPs and their compensation, the mechanisms established must be fair and equitable for these efforts to be truly meaningful. We respectfully urge you to introduce additional legislative refinements to ensure both the commissions and reparation process work fairly and efficiently.

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Thank you for your attention to these issues. We look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Sam Brownback, U.S.S.
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