



CANADIAN HELLENIC CONGRESS
ΕΛΛΗΝΟΚΑΝΑΔΙΚΟ ΚΟΓΚΡΕΣΟ
CONGRÈS HELLÉNIQUE CANADIEN

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August 2, 2020

Via electronic mail:
marc.garneau@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Marc Garneau, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Transport
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Subject: Canada's revocation of landing rights to Turkish Airlines

Dear Minister Garneau,

As you may be aware, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has moved rapidly to convert the monumental ancient Church of Hagia Sophia into a mosque, despite calls from the European Union and the international community, including religious organisations of all beliefs to halt the conversion. The US, Greece, Russia, as well as, Orthodox and Catholic Churches, the Islamic Society of North America, the World Council of Churches and even Pope Francis have added their voices.

Minister, diplomacy is not working, and international voices of protest have fallen on deaf ears. President Erdogan is not listening to reason, as he has no regard for the rule of law. He is deliberately violating international obligations and is bent on a policy that will fuel conflict and war across the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The conversion of the Church of Hagia Sophia – a UNESCO heritage monument – into a mosque is only the beginning. As Erdogan has stated, “the resurrection of Hagia Sophia heralds the liberation of the Al Aqsa Mosque”, located on the Temple Mount, the holiest site of Judaism in the heart of Jerusalem. In essence, this statement makes it clear that the conversion of Hagia Sophia is linked to Erdogan’s wider agenda, which will impact Judaism and Israel too. Erdogan is demanding for his faith and his country, what he is intent on denying to others. This is cause for international concern.

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The Canadian Hellenic Congress is a national democratic communal institution that represents, advances, advocates and promotes the interests and concerns of Canadians of Hellenic descent and Hellenism in general. The Congress is the national voice of Hellenes and their communities and/or organizations across Canada.



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Canada needs to take a stand and take the lead, as it has taken in the past, against tyrannical regimes that violate human rights and international obligations.

Minister, we are asking you and your government – as a first step – to revoke landing rights to Turkish Airlines, the regime’s national airline, whose revenues support Erdogan’s dangerous policies. This action will send a clear message that Canada does not tolerate tyrants and their regimes.

We trust that you and your government will do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Dr Theodore Halatsis
President

Dr. Costas Pappas
V-P, Administration and Secretary

C.c.: Todd Doherty, MP – Cariboo-Prince George, BC; Official Opposition Critic for Transport: Todd.Doherty@parl.gc.ca
Niki Ashton, MP – Churchill-Keewatinook Aski, MB; NDP Critic for Transport: niki.ashton@parl.gc.ca

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