

**DELEGATION OF TURKEY**

**26 September 2007**

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING  
(Warsaw, 24 September-5 October)**

**Working Session 5: Humanitarian issues and other commitments**

**WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION**

**INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN TURKEY**

- The root cause of internal displacement in Turkey has been the scourge of terrorism.
- The Turkish Government attaches great importance to the successful return of her displaced citizens on a voluntary basis. In this regard, the “Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project” (RVRP) has been launched in 1994.
- Moreover, following arduous efforts by an inter-agency commission made up of representatives of all the stakeholders in Turkey, a document entitled “Measures on the Issue of Internally Displaced Persons and the Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project in Turkey” has been finalized in September 2005. It is worth mentioning that the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide the basis for this document. According to the document, endorsed by the Turkish Cabinet, the Ministry of Interior is entrusted with the task of implementing and coordinating the integrated Turkish strategy towards the IDPs.
- It is a truism that internal displacement in Turkey shows different and more complex characteristics when compared to other countries or regions of the world. It is difficult to distinguish between internal displacement due to various reasons and migration due solely to socio-economic reasons. All these factors combine to make an accurate estimate of the number of Turkey’s internally displaced somewhat difficult.
- Turkey’s sole priority is not to come up with a figure of IDPs, but rather to correctly identify them and devise policies to remedy the problems of these people. Furthermore, we believe that a holistic approach should be taken towards the issue. Therefore, whether the IDPs wish to return to their original areas or settlement or to remain in their current locations, all their social, economic and cultural needs should be comprehensively addressed.
- In this regard, the Institute of Population Studies (IPS) of Hacettepe University has completed its survey entitled “Migration and Internally Displaced Population Study in Turkey (MIDPST)” in December 2006.

- According to this study, the figure of IDPs in Turkey range between 950 thousand and 1,2 million. This figure is indeed higher than the official figures of the Ministry of Interior, but at the same time way lower than various projections made by the local and international NGOs.
- This survey, undertaken in full transparency, has aimed not only to identify the IDPs and their needs, but also to shed light on the possible measures to be taken to alleviate their situation. Accordingly, the results of MIDPST will be taken into consideration in devising future strategies and policies vis-à-vis the issue of IDPs. This fact has also been declared by the Turkish Minister of Interior.
- The Turkish Government is determined to ensure the effective implementation of the “Law on the Compensation of Losses Resulting from Terrorist Acts and the Measures Taken Against Terrorism” which entered into force on 27 July 2004. To this end, “Damage Assessment Commissions” are working hard to process the compensation claims. So far, around 266.802 applications have been received, over 50 thousand of which have been processed. Furthermore, the timeframe for application to the above-mentioned commissions has been extended for one year on 30 May 2007.
- The judgment of the European Court of Human Rights on 17 January 2006, on the “Aydın İçyer Case” declaring his application inadmissible, clearly confirmed the efficiency and operability of the Turkish domestic legal procedures. This judgment applies to all similar cases pending before the court. Furthermore, we gladly observed that, during his visit to Turkey on 16-23 February 2006, Mr. Martin Scheinin, UN Human Rights Commission's special rapporteur on human rights and counter terrorism praised the efficiency of this Law.
- The Turkish Government is resolved to effectively address the issue of IDPs in Turkey in a spirit of cooperation with international organizations and NGOs, with transparency and goodwill. In this regard, parallel to MIDPST, a project entitled “Support to the Development of an IDP Programme in Turkey” is being successfully implemented in cooperation with the UNDP Office in Turkey.
- Moreover, as an indication of Turkey’s commitment to international cooperation, Prof. Walter Kälin, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, has visited Turkey four times in a period of 19 months, in May 2005, February 2006, September 2006 and December 2006. These visits enabled Prof. Kälin to meet the representatives of the relevant public institutions, observe the issue in the field (in Van) and exchange opinions with a wide range of Turkish NGOs, as well as Governors and Deputy Governors of the East and Southeast regions.
- During and after these visits, Prof. Kälin announced that he was pleased about the steps that are being taken as well as the overall approach of our government vis-à-vis the IDPs. He further reiterated his satisfaction for the open-minded efforts of the Turkish Government leading to concrete results, and with regard to these steps and overall approach, named Turkey as an example to all the countries bearing IDPs.