

Threats from Turkey Reach Beyond Its Borders

The threats of the gray wolves of Turkey, who today threaten the life of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, are a serious threat that is not confined to Turkish territory. It was a gray wolf who attempted in Vatican City to assassinate Pope John Paul II, nearly killing him.

Turkish Threats Against Christians Become Reality.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/nov/24/turkey.germany>

"The members of a Protestant missionary group were killed during a Bible study class in Malatya on April 18. Their attackers tied the men to their chairs, targeting Tilmann Geske, a German father of three, before turning to Pastor Necati Aydin and Ugur Yuksel. By the time police arrived, the Turkish converts had been virtually decapitated, with their buttocks, testicles, stomachs and backs repeatedly stabbed, their fingers sliced and throats slashed from ear-to-ear. The accused, all between 19 and 20, allegedly filmed clips on their mobile phones."

Compass Direct News reports on "Catholic Priest Stabbed in Turkey"

Istanbul, Turkey
12/31/2007

(December 17, 2007 / Compass Direct News) - A 19-year-old Muslim youth **stabbed** an Italian priest in the stomach yesterday after Sunday services outside a Catholic church in Turkey.

In February 2006, Italian priest Andrea Santoro was **killed** while praying in his chapel in Trabzon by a 16-year-old.

In April, two Turkish converts to Christianity and a German citizen were **tortured and killed** with knives by five young men at a Christian publishing house in Malatya, in southeastern Turkey.

A Syrian Orthodox priest who was **kidnapped** in southeastern Turkey in late November managed to escape his captors - days later. Several of his captors have reportedly been arrested by Turkish authorities.

Extremists in Turkey Frequently Encouraged

Civil Society:

TURKEY: MURDER CASES UNDERSCORE TROUBLES WITH JUDICIAL, POLICE REFORM
Yigal Schleifer: 1/16/08

The killings of the Christians -- a German and two Turks -- occurred only a few months after the Istanbul murder of Hrant Dink, an outspoken Armenian journalist. Dink's murder on an Istanbul sidewalk was quickly followed up by reports that top police officials had been informed months before about a plot by Turkish nationalists to kill him. Meanwhile, a video showing **several policemen proudly posing with the murder suspect** -- a 17-year-old from the Black Sea city of Trabzon -- after he was caught soon surfaced after the murder.

Very Serious Threats Against the Life of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

Secret Turkish Organization Planned Ecumenical Patriarch's Assassination

Istanbul (ANA-MPA/A.Kourkoulas) - A network of retired Turkish officers was planning the assassination of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, an inquiry by Turkish judicial authorities in the activities of a network dismantled last month, revealed.

The network was discovered following the finding of arms and explosives in Istanbul's Umraniye district.

<http://www.greeknewsonline.com/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=7238>

Rock-Throwing Right Wing Turks Protest Outside Phanar & Burn Effigy of Ecumenical Patriarch

Police clashed with hundreds of rock-throwing nationalist Turks who staged a protest outside the seat of the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians.

The protesters on Sunday burned an effigy of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, whom far-right groups accuse of working against Turkish interests.

The demonstrators ignored calls to disperse, broke paving stones and hurled them at police, Anatolia news agency reported.

Police used tear gas against the demonstrators. Officers pursued some protesters down side streets, television station NTV said. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=14>

Ninety Tombs Desecrated In Historical Orthodox Christian Cemetery

Ninety tombs were desecrated by vandals in the beginning of September, at Baloukli cemetery, bringing to mind the tragic pogrom of the Greek community in September 1955. The vandalisms were ascertained in the morning of September 2nd by the guards of the nearby historical Monastery of the Life-giving Spring of Baloukli. The unknown individuals, who committed the sacrilege act, entered by the stone fence of the cemetery that faces the road.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=330>

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew target of assassination plot

IN THE NEWS - A court case reveals 86 members, ranging from the Turkish police, army, business, politics, and the mass media, who are alleged in a plan to assassinate the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with the murder of two Turkish Christians. The case points to a secret, ultra-nationalist organization (Ergenekon) in the upper levels of Turkish government as a driving force in religious oppression. This is addressed in this originally published article, "Turkish nationalism, Ergenekon, and denial of religious freedom", by Forum 18's, Dr. Otmar Oehring of the Human Rights Office at Missio, the Pontifical Mission Society <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=276>

Orthodox Christianity Under Threat

By Nicholas Gage International Herald Tribune

When Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and his Islamic-rooted party came under fierce fire this summer from secularists, who came close to persuading the country's supreme court to bar both from politics, he called the campaign an attack against religious freedom and a threat to Turkey's efforts to join the European Union.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=262>

Former Turkish mayor attempts to obstruct meeting of Ecumenical Patriarchate's Holy Synod

A former Turkish mayor has tried to prevent the meeting of the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, claiming that the August 27-29th meeting violates the Lausanne Treaty, according to a report published in the Turkish Daily News. This has sparked fierce debates every year in the country, since the meetings convened in 2004 for the first

time since 1923, with non-Turkish members. In its defense, the Ecumenical Patriarchate states that because the Turkish government refuses to recognize them as a "legal identity," then it does not have the legal status to be bound by the treaty and therefore has the right to invite any members to the Holy Synod meeting.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=259>

Catholics Urge Turkish Government To Return Confiscated Church

As the Ecumenical Patriarchate continues to fight the Turkish Government for property rights and religious freedom for its Orthodox communities in Turkey, the Catholic Church is now reporting similar struggles.

Turkish Daily News has reported on the ongoing efforts of Catholic leaders who demand tolerance for Christians in Turkey. In a recent letter, Cardinal Joachim Meisner, Archbishop of Cologne, urges Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the reopening of a confiscated Church in Tarsus, the home city of Saint Paul. In late June, thousands of pilgrims are expected to flock to the region for the 2000th birthday of the Apostle. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=230>

European Parliament member Antonios Trakatellis raises questions to the European Council regarding recent attacks and vandalizations of Orthodox communities in Turkey

European Parliament Member Professor Antonios Trakatellis recently inquired to the Council of the European Union on the concerns of vandalizations of Orthodox churches and monasteries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by Turkish Government officials and questions the Council on the measures it intends to take on these perpetrators. The Council's response mentions that it is fully aware of these incidents and admits that "tangible progress is urgently needed" for freedom of religion for the ongoing reform process in Turkey. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=216>

Turkish Forestry Officials Vandalize Historic Church

In response to unlawful destruction of an historic Orthodox Christian Church by eight officials of a local Ministry of Forestry in Turkey, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew sent an official letter to Mevlut Kurban, the District Elder of Princes' Islands, expressing his "strong disappointment and shock." The Ecumenical Patriarch emphasized that Christ the Savior Monastery "had survived numerous fires and earthquakes throughout hundreds of years. It is uncivil to brutalize a sacred building that carries so much cultural history, and unjust to destroy it, especially when Istanbul has been picked to be the capital of civilized Europe in 2010."

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=187>

Ecumenical Patriarch under investigation by Turkish prosecutors

Barholomeos II [sic], the patriarch [sic] of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey, has been called on to give a statement to prosecutors on comments he made declaring that the patriarchy had ecumenical status.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=172>

Archons Condemn Demonstrations at Phanar and Issue Formal Protests

In response to ugly demonstrations by ultra nationalist Turks known as the Grey Wolves that took place at the Ecumenical Patriarchate last Thursday, October 27th, the National Commander Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis issued formal letters of protest and condemnation to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State and the Turkish Ambassador to the United States. Dr. Limberakis also called the US Embassy in Ankara to express the outrage of the Order of St. Andrew regarding these hateful demonstrations and asked the staff to convey these sentiments to the new U.S. Ambassador-Designate Ross Wilson <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=107>

Turkish Nationalists Continue Harassment and Demonstrate at Ecumenical Patriarchate

Turkish nationalists demonstrated on Friday outside the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul to protest its desire to use the title "ecumenical," which is not recognized by Turkey, witnesses said.

Waving Turkish flags and that of the extreme right-wing Nationalist Movement Party, about 150 protestors laid a black wreath at the door of the Patriarchate on the European side of the city bearing the words "Off to Greece with the Patriarchate." <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=102>

Continued Intimidation and Harassment by Istanbul Official Targeting Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

The Greek Orthodox faithful in Turkey have 79 churches, 72 of them in Istanbul, reported Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu yesterday.

Aksu (pictured right) supplied the figures in response to Motherland Party (ANAVATAN) Istanbul Deputy Emin Sirin (pictured left), who, dissatisfied with a previous question on why the activities of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos aren't scrutinized under the Treaty of Lausanne, sent another motion to the Interior Ministry under right to information laws. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=83>

Archons' National Commander Protests Harassment of American Pilgrims

New York - In a letter to U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, Ross Wilson, National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew, Dr. Anthony Limberakis criticized the repressive harassment experienced by devout American pilgrims during their visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Nearly 200 U.S. citizens traveled to Turkey to witness the historical meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul. The event was viewed all over the world as a momentous stepping stone toward bringing together the two largest Christian churches. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=157>

Explosive device at Patriarchate an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police say

ANKARA (ANA - A. Abatzis) The explosive device found in the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Fanar and neutralised by a Turkish bomb squad earlier on Saturday was an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police reported.

Explosion Damages Istanbul Cathedral

An explosion shattered windows at the seat of the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians in Istanbul on Thursday, officials said. There were no reports of injuries.

The blast struck the roof of the Cathedral of St. George, shattering windows there as well as in the main building of the Ecumenical Patriarchate complex, a Patriarchate official said on condition of anonymity.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=21>

Turkish nationalists gatecrash Orthodox Bosphorus celebration

Turkish nationalists chanting slogans and waving the flag of an extreme right-wing party Thursday tried to disrupt a Greek Orthodox religious ceremony here called the benediction of the waters of the Bosphorus, eyewitnesses said.

As part of a tradition dating back to Byzantine times, a crucifix is thrown into the waters and young divers plunge in, competing to recover it.

Some 60 nationalists interrupted the proceedings waving flags of the National Action Party (MHP) and chanting: "This is Turkey here, like it or leave it." <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=40>

Bomb Explodes in Ecumenical Patriarchate Compound

A bomb was thrown into the compound of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and exploded on the roof of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George the Trophy-Bearer at midnight, Istanbul time (5 p.m. EST).

<http://www.goarch.org/news/goa.news662>

Grenade attack on Ecumenical Patriarchate widely condemned

Greece yesterday vehemently condemned the overnight grenade attack against the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in which a Greek Orthodox cleric was injured.

Government spokesman Dimitris Reppas said the Greek government was strongly protesting to the competent Turkish authorities, saying they were not taking necessary security measures "therefore, giving the possibility to fanatics to commit such acts".

<http://www.greekembassy.org/embassy/Content/en/Article.aspx?office=3&folder=252&article=1284&hilite=phanar>

Greek America Magazine reports on "September 6, 1955: Krystallnacht in Constantinople"

Most Greek Americans and most Americans generally are unaware of the fact that on the evening of September 6, and in the early hours of September 7, 1955, the Turkish government carried out the most destructive pogrom that had been enacted in Europe since the infamous Krystallnacht which Hitler and the Nazis inflicted upon the Jewish communities, businesses and synagogues on the eve of World War II. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=198>

Grenade rocks Istanbul's Orthodox patriarchate

ISTANBUL, Oct 7 (Reuters) - A hand grenade shattered church and monastery windows at the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in the Turkish city of Istanbul early on Thursday but no one was hurt, officials said.

http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

Bomb damages seat of Orthodox Church in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, Oct 7 (AFP) - A home-made bomb damaged the seat of the Orthodox Church in Istanbul overnight but no one was hurt in the explosion, Anatolia news agency reported Thursday.

http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

Bomb damages Orthodox Christian church in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) -- Unknown assailants tossed two bombs at the back entrance of a small Orthodox Christian church. One of the bombs went off causing some damage, but no injuries, reports said Saturday.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/decani/message/28297>

Turkey: violent protests against Greek Orthodox patriarchate

The "Turkish nationalists" were protesting -- violently -- the planned reopening of the one and only Orthodox seminary in Turkey. This despite the fact that, according to Turkish law, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople must be a Turkish citizen, born and raised in Turkey. All this is evidence of the fact that the slow strangulation of non-Muslim communities, as mandated by classic Islamic laws that forbid dhimmis to repair old churches or build new ones, is still very much part of the program of "secular" Turkey, both in its legal structures and in the minds of its citizens.

<http://www.jihadwatch.org/2004/09/turkey-violent-protests-against-greek-orthodox-patriarchate.html>

Ancient Orthodox Christian monastery near extinction by Turkish land officials

Turkish government land officials, to the dismay of Christians, are redrawing boundaries around a Syriac Orthodox monastery and surrounding villages located near the Turkish-Syrian region supposedly to update a national land registry. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=290>

Christian Pastor Attacked in Turkey as Country Seeks Religious Tolerance

In a handwritten letter he was accused of not serving Christianity, but being used to attack traditional Turkish values. Turkey has made many improvements to increase religious tolerance and freedom over the past year, however it has been reported that Protestant pastor Wolfgang Hade serving in Izmit has recently received threats against him and his family, reported Compass Direct. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=73>

THE NIGHT OF TERROR IN CONSTANTINOPLE - POGROM 1955

Under the terms of the agreement regarding the exchange of populations in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek population of Constantinople—a thriving community—and the muslim community residing in Western Thrace were exempted from the exchange process. http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

Religious Discrimination: The Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is the oldest active institution in Eastern Europe and the Balkans today. Its history dates back to 330 A.D., when Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to the new city of Constantinople. Since then, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has been the spiritual center of Orthodox Christians worldwide, its influence spanning from Russia to the United States, and from Finland to South Africa. http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

The Greeks of Istanbul: Paper presented on the OSCE – ODIHR Meeting on Human Dimensions in Warsaw on October 24th, 2000

Under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne which brought the Greco-Turkish War to an end, 120,000 Greeks stayed on in Turkey after 1923; this figure was offset by the 86,000 Muslims who remained in Greek Thrace. The number of Muslims in Greek Thrace today exceeds 100,000, while the Greek Community in Turkey, oppressed by a systematic orgy of persecutions, has dwindled to just 2,000 people. http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

The Massacres of September 6-7 1955

The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. -- Article 38 of the Lausanne Treaty, which Turkey violates. <http://www.hellas.org/constantinople/index.htm>

Orthodox Christianity under threat

By Nicholas Gage

“The ecumenical patriarch, Bartholomew I, is often jeered and threatened when he ventures outside his walled enclave. He is periodically burned in effigy by Turkish chauvinists and Muslim fanatics.”

Some of the Explosives Used Against the Ecumenical Patriarch

Constantinople's last hurrah: Turkey and the Ecumenical Patriarchate

By Mason, Whit

Publication: World Policy Journal

Date: Sunday, July 1 2001

"Until quite recently, most Turks regarded the prelate's headquarters as a den of Greek spies. Tarasios says that when he arrived in Istanbul ten years ago articles about the Patriarchate in the Turkish press were always negative, often viciously so. In 1990, an angry demonstration by some 40 Turks from Eastern Thrace, in Greece, shut down the Patriarchate for several days. Police said they could do nothing. In 1994, terrorists calling themselves the "Fighters of Light" threw a huge bomb, which fortunately did not explode, into the compound. After it was defused, police found a note left by militants vowing they would battle "until this place, which for years has contrived Byzantine intrigues against the Muslim peoples of the East, is exterminated." In 1997, another bomb bounced off the Church of St. George before exploding and seriously injuring a monk."

Had one of these bombs not been found by the gardener and defused by a bomb squad before it exploded the Ecumenical Patriarch would have been killed and much of the Patriarchate destroyed.

Bomb Explodes in Ecumenical Patriarchate Compound

NEW YORK -- A bomb was thrown into the compound of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and exploded on the roof of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George the Trophy-Bearer at midnight, Istanbul time (5 p.m. EST). The interior of the Church had not been inspected at the time of this report. The explosion shattered part of the roof, damaged metal gutters, hurled shrapnel around the courtyard and shattered numerous windows. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was not in the compound at the time of the explosion. Although no one was in the courtyard at the time of the explosion, the Tritevon, Reverend Deacon Nektarios, was severely injured by shrapnel and glass shards that penetrated the windows in the office across, where he was working. First reports are that he is in serious condition, but he is expected to recover. A previous attack in September of 1996 also damaged the Cathedral of St. George, but no one was injured.

Human Right Internet: The United Nations Human Rights System. Retrieved on 2006-11-28

"The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople has been the target of bomb attacks (in 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2004), desecration of patriarchal cemeteries and personal assaults against the Ecumenical Patriarch."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew target of assassination plot

Oslo, Norway

11/3/2008

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=276>

IN THE NEWS - A court case reveals 86 members, ranging from the Turkish police, army, business, politics, and the mass media, who are alleged in a plan to assassinate the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with the murder of two Turkish Christians. The case points to a secret, ultra-nationalist organization (Ergenekon) in the upper levels of Turkish

government as a driving force in religious oppression. This is addressed in this originally published article, "Turkish nationalism, Ergenekon, and denial of religious freedom", by Forum 18's, Dr. Otmar Oehring of the Human Rights Office at Missio, the Pontifical Mission Society.

Rogue Group of Retired Turkish Officers Planning Assassination of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

7/26/2007

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=169>

A network of Turkish retired officers was planning even the murder of Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomew according to investigations conducted by Turkish judicial authorities. The network was dismantled last month when weapons and explosives were found near in a hovel near Konstantinopolis. "Aksam" newspaper says that evidence on the planning of Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomew assassination was found in the hard disc of the "National Forces Union" president, Bekir Ozturk. The same organization seems to have been planning assassinations of the Armenian Patriarch and Jewish businessman, Isaac Alaton, whose partner Gary was murdered under unknown conditions.

Bekir Ozturk was arrested within the framework of interrogations about the organization of retired officers who possessed an arsenal of grenades, bombs and other weapons taken from the army. The network of retired officers was cooperating with the nationalist organization " Movement of Patriotic forces and other 4 organizations. The organization was founded on December, 27, 2006 and has 105 offices in 40 districts and 600.000 members.

The ecumenical Patriarchate has in the past experienced grenade attacks, claimed by an organization called IBDA, believed to be of Islamic roots. However, grenades and explosives used in the attacks came from military warehouses and in some cases their serial numbers were recognized by NATO procedures.

According to "Aksam" newspaper judicial authorities have called security authorities and intelligence services to strengthen security of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Armenian Patriarch and Isaac Alaton.

A Plethora of Organized Efforts to Kill Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Other Christians

TURKEY: Turkish nationalism, Ergenekon, and denial of religious freedom

By Dr. Otmar Oehring, Head of the Human Rights Office of Missio

Article published October 21, 2008

A trial has begun in Turkey of influential people alleged to be part of an ultra-nationalist group, Ergenekon. Otmar Oehring of the German Catholic charity Missio notes, in a commentary for Forum 18 News Service, that opposition to religious freedom is widespread. Ergenekon members are alleged to have maintained deathlists of people, including Christians with a missionary background. The Malatya murder trial is revealing plausible links between Ergenekon, the "deep state" and the murders. But local officials -- who are almost certainly not in an Ergenekon-type group -- are also hostile to religious freedom. The Ergenekon case is part of a power-struggle between the "deep state" and the AKP government, but it is unclear whether the current trials will advance freedom of religion and belief. Given the threats to

the day-to-day security and religious freedom of non-nationalist Turks, whether the government effectively addresses the roots of these threats will be crucial.

A court case in Turkey has pointed to the existence of a secretive underground ultra-nationalist organisation Ergenekon, though this might merely be another name for the "deep state". The trial began near Istanbul on 20 October of 86 alleged members -- from the police, army, business, politics and the mass media - on charges that they were plotting to overthrow the current Justice and Development Party (AKP) government by 2009.

The "deep state" is the term used in Turkey for nationalist circles in the army, police, National Intelligence Organisation (MIT) secret police and state administration, which regard themselves as the custodians of the secularist legacy of the Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (see [F18News 28 June 2007](#)). The MIT closely monitors religious minorities, and some MIT officers do indeed believe in protecting religious minorities. But other MIT officers are staunch nationalists and fully part of the "deep state" (see [F18News 10 July 2007](#)).

Opposition to religious freedom is widespread among the "deep state" and wider sections of political life and the general public. This hostility has resulted in deaths and violent attacks, and has not been effectively addressed by the government (see [F18News 15 April 2008](#)).

The anti-religious minority views of ultra-nationalist circles and the "deep state" were no secret, especially to the religious minorities themselves. But reports in the Turkish media about Ergenekon have, perhaps for the first time, given the wider Turkish public the details of the conspiracies. Many Turkish analysts think that the allegations made so far will turn out to be true.

Members of Ergenekon are alleged to have maintained lists of people -- including Christians with a missionary background - targeted for killing. The involvement of Ergenekon has been alleged in the murders of Catholic priest Fr Andrea Santoro in Trabzon in February 2006 and three Protestants - Necati Aydin, Tillman Geske and Ugur Y ksel - in Malatya in April 2007. The MIT secret police is known to have maintained observation of the places where all four of these Christians were killed (see [F18News 10 July 2007](#)).

The trial of those accused of the Malatya murders is revealing that there may be links between Ergenekon, the "deep state" and the murders. As Christian news service Compass Direct reported on 21 October, the lawyer Orhan Kemal Cengiz, who leads the legal team representing the victims' families, states that there is a "very dark, complex, sophisticated web of relations behind the scenes."

Indeed, the Ergenekon people not only seem to be the masterminds of the Santoro and Malatya murders (and of the murder of ethnic Armenian journalist Hrant Dink), they even had a plan to kill the Ecumenical Patriarch -- or at least to incite his murder in a way that could not be traced back to them.

Among those arrested in the investigation against Ergenekon was ultranationalist lawyer Kemal Kerincsiz. As well as filing complaints against numerous writers for "insulting Turkishness" under the notorious Article 301 of the Penal Code, he also brought a high-profile case of "insulting Islam" under the same Article against Hakan Tastan and Turan Topal, Turks who joined a Protestant church.

Even the so-called Turkish Orthodox Church -- which has almost no followers and was apparently designed by its founders as an irritant to the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate -- is revealed to have been closely linked with such circles. This "church" has been publicly supportive of Kerincsiz's claims that Turkish Christians "insult Turkishness".

Ergenekon is said to have used "Turkish Orthodox Church" buildings, and to be closely linked with those who run this "church".

Ergenekon-style nationalists are certain that almost everyone is against the Turks and Turkishness. Particular enemies of Turkey are thought by these circles to be all of Turkey's ethnic minorities, particularly Kurds (some of whom are Alevi Muslims), as well as non-Muslim minorities. These views have long been widespread even outside Ergenekon-type circles (see [F18News 29 November 2007](#)).

Ergenekon-type circles collected information on groups within these populations -- it helped that they had close ties to authorities with access to the personal data registry which records individuals' ethnic and religious affiliation. It is not known if Ergenekon itself -- if it existed in the form that is claimed - sent spies into religious minority communities.

However, all religious minorities -- especially Christians -- have long had unknown people visiting their services. Sometimes these visitors say they are there from the MIT secret police to "protect" them, though more often they refuse to explain who they are (see [F18News 26 July 2006](#)).

Religious minorities doubt whether the police or MIT secret police would really attend their places of worship to protect them: they are more likely to believe they are there to listen, watch and take notes. Even this year in 2008, believers leaving services are asked who they are and why they have attended. The authorities want to know whether those attending Christian churches are foreigners, local "foreigners" or possible converts. Ergenekon could have played a part in such enquiries.

Many religious leaders have long been under surveillance by the MIT secret police. "Walls have ears," is the constant refrain in religious minority headquarters. Particularly close tabs were kept on Armenian Patriarch Mesrop Mutafyan, who had two "bodyguards" from the secret police with him constantly.

Again it remains unclear if this surveillance is to protect them or to keep tabs on all their activity. That a grenade could have been thrown into Patriarch Bartholomew's office from a small street outside the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul's Fener district - which is under full and very visible police surveillance - shows that any "protection" is at best ineffectual. Those charged with protecting religious leaders have not managed to stop threats against them.

Religious minority leaders live with threats constantly, whether through the media or directly. Patriarch Mesrop would receive about 300 emailed threats each day -- whether from one individual or many is unknown. Unknown people watch religious minority buildings, making sure they are seen and noticed by the religious minorities.

Perhaps the biggest impact so far of this constant atmosphere of threats is on the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate, Turkey's biggest Christian denomination. Mesrop Mutafyan, who was elected Patriarch in 1998 against the express wishes of the Turkish authorities, has been forced to retreat into health-related seclusion. Many believe the severe health problems he is suffering -- which have affected him both physically and mentally - are akin to post-traumatic stress disorder. They believe these have been brought on by years of pressure from the media, the public and from the Armenian diaspora, some of which has dubbed him a traitor. As well as opposing his original election, the Turkish authorities also made trouble for him over the restoration of the Patriarchate several years ago.

Should Patriarch Mesrop not recover and be in a position to take up his functions again, this could threaten the future of the Armenian Church in Turkey. The Turkish authorities are likely to insist -- as they have done up to now -- that the head of the Armenian (as well as the Greek Orthodox) Patriarchate must be a Turkish citizen resident in Turkey. The

Armenian Church may struggle to find a candidate with the diplomatic and linguistic skills and the international experience for such a crucial role in such a delicate and exposed position. This problem is of importance not just for the Church but for the Armenian community as a whole.

However, it is clear that Ergenekon and the "deep state" are not the only obstacle for freedom of religion or belief. Local officials -- who are almost certainly not in an Ergenekon-type organisation -- continue to obstruct the work of non-Muslim communities. This can clearly be seen when it comes to property disputes.

Roman Catholics, for example, face several difficult property battles, most notably in the southern coastal city of Mersin, where they have a large compound which they have used since Ottoman times. The only document the Catholics have confirming their ownership is a firman (decree) issued by the Ottoman sultan, which the local authorities do not consider is valid. Successive court cases brought by the local authorities in the 1980s finally reached Turkey's Supreme Court in Ankara in the 1990s, which ruled in favour of the Catholics.

Such ownership problems are faced by all the minorities, despite their widely differing legal status. As is the case with all non-Muslim minority groups, Catholics do not legally exist. Furthermore, as their properties are not organised as "community foundations", their properties have no legal personality on their own. And as the Catholics do not legally exist, the government at times argues that they therefore also cannot have property. This shows that despite government claims, these property problems have not been resolved by the latest Foundations Law (see [F18News 13 March 2008](#)).

In the case of the Catholics of Mersin, the local authorities re-started the dispute through the courts, in a case that is now pending at the High Court. Catholics fear a negative ruling, which would force them to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg. This would be extremely expensive and time-consuming, even though this may turn out to be the only effective way for religious minorities to secure freedom of religion or belief (see [F18News 18 January 2007](#)).

The authorities in Mersin argue that the Ottoman firman only allows Catholic people to construct a specific building (a church) and did not grant them ownership of the land on which it was built. Similar court cases were brought in the past over the Assumptionist Church in Kadikoy, Istanbul (ECHR case No. 26308/95).

The Mersin authorities' desire to confiscate Catholic property would leave the community with nowhere to worship, though it remains unclear how far the authorities would go. They could take away legal ownership, while allowing the Catholics to continue to use the church. In the past, authorities elsewhere have used such methods to confiscate religious property "legally".

Another example is in Adana. The town's Jesuit-run Catholic church has long faced harassment from local people attending a nearby wedding hall, which was built close to it in defiance of regulations. The mayor's office has said that the wedding hall should be closed but has taken no action to enforce this.

Ancient cemeteries where Christians are buried -- such as in Samsun -- or Christian sections of bigger cemeteries -- as in Ankara - are also not being protected from vandalism, despite requests from the Christian Churches. In the Black Sea port of Trabzon -- where Fr Santoro was murdered - the Christian cemetery is threatened with confiscation. Muslim cemeteries face no such problems.

By contrast, spokespersons for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate have pointed to two positive developments. They

welcomed the January 2008 statement in parliament by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that the issue of whether its Patriarch, Bartholomew, is "Ecumenical" or not is an "internal" matter for the Patriarchate and that the state should not interfere. Previously the authorities have responded ferociously to any claims that Bartholomew's religious role extends beyond Istanbul's tiny surviving Greek Orthodox community.

Greek Orthodox spokespersons also welcome the July 2008 ruling by the ECHR in Strasbourg over the Buyukada orphanage, particularly the finding that not only does the property belong to the Orthodox Patriarchate but that the Patriarchate is an existing legal person (application no. 14340/05).

Erdogan's statement about the title "Ecumenical" is likely to have little immediate impact on the general public, which continues to regard the Patriarchate with suspicion or hostility. The ECHR ruling should have an impact on other religious communities which have so far struggled to assert their right to a legal existence.

Meanwhile a new party, the Law and Equality Party (Hak ve Esitlik Partisi), was created on 4 September to promote a nationalist agenda. The party, founded by a former general prominent in the war against the PKK Kurdish rebels, is also aimed at getting rid of Christians and ending Christian proselytism. The first sentence of the call to found the party -- published as a full-page advertisement in many newspapers - attacks what it calls the "colonisation" of Turkey by missionaries, presumably Christian. "Turkish nation -- we know that you are fed up that your democracy is treated like a child, that foreign representatives and missionaries run around on our soil and boss you around," it reads.

Although the party seems to be well-organised in Turkey's provinces, it remains unclear how serious it is and how many votes it might be able to gather in an election. Nevertheless, the party reflects more widely-held chauvinist views, which see no place in Turkey for non-Muslim minorities (see F18News 29 November 2007).

Public opinion in Turkey is becoming more hostile to freedom of religion or belief, and increasingly favours extreme nationalism of the Ergenekon kind. The government's actions are favourable to these kinds of views -- even if not to the Ergenekon group itself -- and it does not seem to want to act effectively to protect non-nationalist Turkish citizens. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is not itself an extreme nationalist party, but it could do much more to make it unambiguously clear that religious and ethnic minorities are Turkish citizens with equal rights.

The AKP itself is under threat from Ergenekon-style views; indeed, those associated with the "deep state" recently tried to have the AKP banned. A fight is underway between the Army and the old Kemalist "deep state" on one side and the AKP on the other. But it is not at all clear that the AKP is necessarily in this fight to advance democratic values, including freedom of religion and belief.

It also remains unclear whether the AKP will prevail. Visits by members of the General Staff to Ergenekon prisoners ahead of the trial have been interpreted as a warning to the AKP not to go too far.

The court case against alleged key leaders and members of Ergenekon is merely the latest step in the power-struggle between the "deep state" (of which Ergenekon appears to have been a part) and the AKP. That the judiciary -- quite obviously pushed by the government -- has initiated the court case can be seen as proof that the AKP government is fighting back against those groups in society and state that are striving to drive the AKP from power.

Whether the Ergenekon court case will prove to be a step towards real democracy in Turkey -- leading to improvements in the area of freedom of religion and belief -- is quite another question. It is not only the court cases on Ergenekon and the Malatya murders which will decide this. Given the undeniable threats to the day-to-day security and religious

freedom of Turks who are not nationalists, whether the AKP government effectively addresses the roots of these threats will be crucial in deciding this question.

Continued Intimidation and Harassment by Istanbul Official Targeting Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

8/24/2005

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=83>

ANKARA - The Greek Orthodox faithful in Turkey have 79 churches, 72 of them in Istanbul, reported Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu yesterday.

Aksu (pictured right) supplied the figures in response to Motherland Party (ANAVATAN) Istanbul Deputy Emin Sirin (pictured left), who, dissatisfied with a previous question on why the the activities of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos aren't scrutinized under the Treaty of Lausanne, sent another motion to the Interior Ministry under right to information laws.

Sirin stressed that the patriarch has attended religious ceremonies, opened churches with religious ceremonies, participated in visits, receptions, celebrations, funerals, and religious tourism activities so far in Yalvac, Isparta, Avanos, Zelve, and Urgup in Nevsehir, Silivri in Istanbul, and Selcuk in Izmir.

In reply to Sirin's motion, Aksu explained that the Culture and Tourism approves the patriarch's movements related to religious tourism and religious ceremonies and the relevant governors' offices refer the matter to the General Directorate of Security. He added that the necessary measures are taken.

Explosive device at Patriarchate an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police say

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=43>

3/3/2005

News Thursday 3, March 2005

Explosive device at Patriarchate an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police say

ANKARA (ANA - A. Abatzis) The explosive device found in the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Fanar and neutralised by a Turkish bomb squad earlier on Saturday was an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police reported.

According to an ANA correspondent in Ankara, the unexploded grenade was spotted on the roof of St. George's Church within the Patriarchate grounds by a crew of window-cleaners.

Turkish police said the grenade may have been thrown any time in the past month but went unnoticed because it did not explode.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has been the target of similar attacks several times in the past, with grenades lobbed from the area behind the grounds and always landing near the same spot on the roof of the church. Past attacks have been accompanied by explosions.

Commenting from Athens, Greek foreign ministry spokesman George Koumoutsakos unequivocally condemned the incident and said that Greek diplomatic and consular authorities in Ankara and Istanbul had

already conveyed their deep concern over the incident to Turkish authorities and asked for stronger security measures around the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Terrorist Bomb Explodes at Ecumenical Patriarchate

Associated Press, Istanbul, Turkey
10/7/2004

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=21>

Explosion Damages Istanbul Cathedral

An explosion shattered windows at the seat of the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians in Istanbul on Thursday, officials said. There were no reports of injuries.

The blast struck the roof of the Cathedral of St. George, shattering windows there as well as in the main building of the Ecumenical Patriarchate complex, a Patriarchate official said on condition of anonymity.

A terrorism police squad was investigating the cause of the blast, police officials said.

The blast came weeks after police clashed with hundreds of rock-throwing nationalist Turks who staged a protest outside the Patriarchate and burned an effigy of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, whom far-right groups accuse of working against Turkish interests.

Archbishop Demetrios Condemns Hostile Demonstrations Against Our Ecumenical Patriarchate

10/30/2005

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=104>

NEW YORK - Archbishop Demetrios of America has expressed his deepest sorrow and his strong and unequivocal condemnation for the most recent hostile demonstrations and threats against the holy center of world Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in Istanbul, Turkey.

This latest assault took place last Thursday, October 28, when groups of Turkish nationalists and other extreme elements demonstrated in Phanar against the Ecumenical Patriarchate chanting slogans such as "one night we'll come to the Phanar," "go away Patriarch," "Patriarch don't test our patience," "take the Patriarchate and go to Greece," and the like. Before police intervened, the angry demonstrators reached the entrance to the Patriarchal compound, and placed a black wreath in front of the gate.

Archbishop Demetrios in his statement of condemnation said, "I express my deepest sorrow for the events that transpired outside of our Ecumenical Patriarchate last Thursday. The actions of these Turkish extremists-nationalists are appalling and condemnable in and by any civilized country. These are actions against a holy institution which survived and lives on through the centuries. It's an institution highly respected by the entire civilized world. These demonstrators are short changing themselves and Turkey, as they paint a picture of uncivilized, petty, narrow-minded people."

"As a Church and as Orthodox in America, we are in spirit and in prayer by the side of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, and we stand in full support with love and care towards our Mother Church as we are reassured that He Who has many times saved this Patriarchate and has protected it in difficult times will once again be

next to our Ecumenical Patriarch and the Fathers of the Great Church of Christ and He will lead this crisis to a favorable result according to the teachings of our Lord, that God, 'will not break a bruised reed, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory' (Matt. 12:20)."

Serbian Orthodox Church Expresses Concern Over Activities of Extremist Groups in Turkey Against Ecumenical Patriarchate

11/7/2005

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=106>

Solidarity with Patriarchate of Constantinople

The Assembly is also disturbed by frequent libelous assaults against certain institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which are groundlessly and irresponsibly accused of hiding persons indicted for war crimes. The members of the Assembly reacted similarly to the slander and attacks by extremist groups in Turkey against the Patriarchate of Constantinople and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. The Assembly firmly hopes that the state institutions of the Republic of Turkey, clearly oriented toward a European future, will offer adequate protection and legal security to the Orthodox Church, other Christian churches, and all minority communities on its territory.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP SPYRIDON

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

<http://www.goarch.org/news/goa.news660>

His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon of America strongly condemned this latest criminal act of the bombing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey, on December 3, 1997.

Upon reflecting on this act of terror, the serious wounding of a clergyman, and the destruction of property of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His Eminence said:

"Six weeks after he received the Congressional Gold Medal, the Ecumenical Patriarch was threatened by a bomb blast directed at him and his Church. This is unacceptable.

At the dawn of the 21st century, it is inconceivable that the basic human rights, such as the freedom of worship, the ability to live a peaceful life according to the law of one's country, and the freedom to live without the constant fear of having one's life and property destroyed without cause, are still abused and denied in countries such as Turkey.

How can a person claim for himself to be civilized, to be peace-loving, to be respectful of human rights and to be treated as part of the civilized world when his own actions violate these universally accepted tenets of humanity.

I condemn all violence and persecution of human beings everywhere, for every person is gifted by God with dignity, honor, and the right to live a peaceful life.

It is the responsibility of the Government of Turkey to provide safety and security for all of her citizens, and to seriously obey the international rules which govern a civilized society.

I, on behalf of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and all those who seek justice and peace throughout the world, condemn this act of violence and terror that occurred at the heart of Orthodox Christianity. Along with the clergyman who was seriously injured as a result of this bombing, over 300 million Orthodox Christians, and in fact all people of good will, have been wounded by this evil act.

I simply ask myself and the world: Is it possible that after nearly 2,000 years of uninterrupted history that in the latter days of the 20th century, the beacon of Orthodoxy the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople which provides the light of faith, peace, and universal hope for all people, still lives in the shadows of such violent hatred?"

time since 1923, with non-Turkish members. In its defense, the Ecumenical Patriarchate states that because the Turkish government refuses to recognize them as a "legal identity," then it does not have the legal status to be bound by the treaty and therefore has the right to invite any members to the Holy Synod meeting.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=259>

Catholics Urge Turkish Government To Return Confiscated Church

As the Ecumenical Patriarchate continues to fight the Turkish Government for property rights and religious freedom for its Orthodox communities in Turkey, the Catholic Church is now reporting similar struggles.

Turkish Daily News has reported on the ongoing efforts of Catholic leaders who demand tolerance for Christians in Turkey. In a recent letter, Cardinal Joachim Meisner, Archbishop of Cologne, urges Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan for the reopening of a confiscated Church in Tarsus, the home city of Saint Paul. In late June, thousands of pilgrims are expected to flock to the region for the 2000th birthday of the Apostle. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=230>

European Parliament member Antonios Trakatellis raises questions to the European Council regarding recent attacks and vandalizations of Orthodox communities in Turkey

European Parliament Member Professor Antonios Trakatellis recently inquired to the Council of the European Union on the concerns of vandalizations of Orthodox churches and monasteries of the Ecumenical Patriarchate by Turkish Government officials and questions the Council on the measures it intends to take on these perpetrators. The Council's response mentions that it is fully aware of these incidents and admits that "tangible progress is urgently needed" for freedom of religion for the ongoing reform process in Turkey. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=216>

Turkish Forestry Officials Vandalize Historic Church

In response to unlawful destruction of an historic Orthodox Christian Church by eight officials of a local Ministry of Forestry in Turkey, His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew sent an official letter to Mevlut Kurban, the District Elder of Princes' Islands, expressing his "strong disappointment and shock." The Ecumenical Patriarch emphasized that Christ the Savior Monastery "had survived numerous fires and earthquakes throughout hundreds of years. It is uncivil to brutalize a sacred building that carries so much cultural history, and unjust to destroy it, especially when Istanbul has been picked to be the capital of civilized Europe in 2010."

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=187>

Ecumenical Patriarch under investigation by Turkish prosecutors

Barholomeos II [sic], the patriarch [sic] of the Greek Orthodox Church in Turkey, has been called on to give a statement to prosecutors on comments he made declaring that the patriarchy had ecumenical status.

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=172>

Archons Condemn Demonstrations at Phanar and Issue Formal Protests

In response to ugly demonstrations by ultra nationalist Turks known as the Grey Wolves that took place at the Ecumenical Patriarchate last Thursday, October 27th, the National Commander Dr. Anthony J. Limberakis issued formal letters of protest and condemnation to the President of the United States, the Secretary of State and the Turkish Ambassador to the United States. Dr. Limberakis also called the US Embassy in Ankara to express the outrage of the Order of St. Andrew regarding these hateful demonstrations and asked the staff to convey these sentiments to the new U.S. Ambassador-Designate Ross Wilson <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=107>

Turkish Nationalists Continue Harassment and Demonstrate at Ecumenical Patriarchate

Turkish nationalists demonstrated on Friday outside the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Istanbul to protest its desire to use the title "ecumenical," which is not recognized by Turkey, witnesses said.

Waving Turkish flags and that of the extreme right-wing Nationalist Movement Party, about 150 protestors laid a black wreath at the door of the Patriarchate on the European side of the city bearing the words "Off to Greece with the Patriarchate." <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=102>

Continued Intimidation and Harassment by Istanbul Official Targeting Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

The Greek Orthodox faithful in Turkey have 79 churches, 72 of them in Istanbul, reported Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu yesterday.

Aksu (pictured right) supplied the figures in response to Motherland Party (ANAVATAN) Istanbul Deputy Emin Sirin (pictured left), who, dissatisfied with a previous question on why the activities of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos aren't scrutinized under the Treaty of Lausanne, sent another motion to the Interior Ministry under right to information laws. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=83>

Archons' National Commander Protests Harassment of American Pilgrims

New York - In a letter to U.S. Ambassador to Turkey, Ross Wilson, National Commander of the Order of Saint Andrew, Dr. Anthony Limberakis criticized the repressive harassment experienced by devout American pilgrims during their visit to the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Nearly 200 U.S. citizens traveled to Turkey to witness the historical meeting between Pope Benedict XVI and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew in Istanbul. The event was viewed all over the world as a momentous stepping stone toward bringing together the two largest Christian churches. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=157>

Explosive device at Patriarchate an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police say

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Explosion Damages Istanbul Cathedral

An explosion shattered windows at the seat of the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians in Istanbul on Thursday, officials said. There were no reports of injuries.

The blast struck the roof of the Cathedral of St. George, shattering windows there as well as in the main building of the Ecumenical Patriarchate complex, a Patriarchate official said on condition of anonymity. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=21>

Turkish nationalists gatecrash Orthodox Bosphorus celebration

Turkish nationalists chanting slogans and waving the flag of an extreme right-wing party Thursday tried to disrupt a Greek Orthodox religious ceremony here called the benediction of the waters of the Bosphorus, eyewitnesses said.

As part of a tradition dating back to Byzantine times, a crucifix is thrown into the waters and young divers plunge in, competing to recover it.

Some 60 nationalists interrupted the proceedings waving flags of the National Action Party (MHP) and chanting: "This is Turkey here, like it or leave it." <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=40>

Bomb Explodes in Ecumenical Patriarchate Compound

A bomb was thrown into the compound of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and exploded on the roof of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George the Trophy-Bearer at midnight, Istanbul time (5 p.m. EST).

<http://www.goarch.org/news/goa.news662>

Grenade attack on Ecumenical Patriarchate widely condemned

Greece yesterday vehemently condemned the overnight grenade attack against the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople in which a Greek Orthodox cleric was injured.

Government spokesman Dimitris Reppas said the Greek government was strongly protesting to the competent Turkish authorities, saying they were not taking necessary security measures "therefore, giving the possibility to fanatics to commit such acts".

<http://www.greekembassy.org/embassy/Content/en/Article.aspx?office=3&folder=252&article=1284&hilite=phanar>

Greek America Magazine reports on "September 6, 1955: Krystallnacht in Constantinople"

Most Greek Americans and most Americans generally are unaware of the fact that on the evening of September 6, and in the early hours of September 7, 1955, the Turkish government carried out the most destructive pogrom that had been enacted in Europe since the infamous Krystallnacht which Hitler and the Nazis inflicted upon the Jewish communities, businesses and synagogues on the eve of World War II. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=198>

Grenade rocks Istanbul's Orthodox patriarchate

ISTANBUL, Oct 7 (Reuters) - A hand grenade shattered church and monastery windows at the Greek Orthodox patriarchate in the Turkish city of Istanbul early on Thursday but no one was hurt, officials said.

http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

Bomb damages seat of Orthodox Church in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, Oct 7 (AFP) - A home-made bomb damaged the seat of the Orthodox Church in Istanbul overnight but no one was hurt in the explosion, Anatolia news agency reported Thursday.

http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

Bomb damages Orthodox Christian church in Istanbul

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) -- Unknown assailants tossed two bombs at the back entrance of a small Orthodox Christian church. One of the bombs went off causing some damage, but no injuries, reports said Saturday.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/decani/message/28297>

Turkey: violent protests against Greek Orthodox patriarchate

The "Turkish nationalists" were protesting -- violently -- the planned reopening of the one and only Orthodox seminary in Turkey. This despite the fact that, according to Turkish law, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople must be a Turkish citizen, born and raised in Turkey. All this is evidence of the fact that the slow strangulation of non-Muslim communities, as mandated by classic Islamic laws that forbid dhimmis to repair old churches or build new ones, is still very much part of the program of "secular" Turkey, both in its legal structures and in the minds of its citizens.

<http://www.jihadwatch.org/2004/09/turkey-violent-protests-against-greek-orthodox-patriarchate.html>

Ancient Orthodox Christian monastery near extinction by Turkish land officials

Turkish government land officials, to the dismay of Christians, are redrawing boundaries around a Syriac Orthodox monastery and surrounding villages located near the Turkish-Syrian region supposedly to update a national land registry. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=290>

Christian Pastor Attacked in Turkey as Country Seeks Religious Tolerance

In a handwritten letter he was accused of not serving Christianity, but being used to attack traditional Turkish values. Turkey has made many improvements to increase religious tolerance and freedom over the past year, however it has been reported that Protestant pastor Wolfgang Hade serving in Izmit has recently received threats against him and his family, reported Compass Direct. <http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=73>

THE NIGHT OF TERROR IN CONSTANTINOPLE - POGROM 1955

Under the terms of the agreement regarding the exchange of populations in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, the Greek population of Constantinople-a thriving community-and the muslim community residing in Western Thrace were exempted from the exchange process. http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

Religious Discrimination: The Ecumenical Patriarchate

The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople is the oldest active institution in Eastern Europe and the Balkans today. Its history dates back to 330 A.D., when Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire to the new city of Constantinople. Since then, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has been the spiritual center of Orthodox Christians worldwide, its influence spanning from Russia to the United States, and from Finland to South Africa. http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

The Greeks of Istanbul: Paper presented on the OSCE – ODIHR Meeting on Human Dimensions in Warsaw on October 24th, 2000

Under the terms of the Treaty of Lausanne which brought the Greco-Turkish War to an end, 120,000 Greeks stayed on in Turkey after 1923; this figure was offset by the 86,000 Muslims who remained in Greek Thrace. The number of Muslims in Greek Thrace today exceeds 100,000, while the Greek Community in Turkey, oppressed by a systematic orgy of persecutions, has dwindled to just 2,000 people. http://www.kosovo.net/news/archive/2004/October_08/1.html

The Massacres of September 6-7 1955

The Turkish Government undertakes to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Turkey without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion. -- Article 38 of the Lausanne Treaty, which Turkey violates. <http://www.hellas.org/constantinople/index.htm>

Orthodox Christianity under threat

By Nicholas Gage

"The ecumenical patriarch, Bartholomew I, is often jeered and threatened when he ventures outside his walled enclave. He is periodically burned in effigy by Turkish chauvinists and Muslim fanatics."

Some of the Explosives Used Against the Ecumenical Patriarch

Constantinople's last hurrah: Turkey and the Ecumenical Patriarchate

By Mason, Whit

Publication: World Policy Journal

Date: Sunday, July 1 2001

"Until quite recently, most Turks regarded the prelate's headquarters as a den of Greek spies. Tarasios says that when he arrived in Istanbul ten years ago articles about the Patriarchate in the Turkish press were always negative, often viciously so. In 1990, an angry demonstration by some 40 Turks from Eastern Thrace, in Greece, shut down the Patriarchate for several days. Police said they could do nothing. In 1994, terrorists calling themselves the "Fighters of Light" threw a huge bomb, which fortunately did not explode, into the compound. After it was defused, police found a note left by militants vowing they would battle "until this place, which for years has contrived Byzantine intrigues against the Muslim peoples of the East, is exterminated." In 1997, another bomb bounced off the Church of St. George before exploding and seriously injuring a monk."

Had one of these bombs not been found by the gardener and defused by a bomb squad before it exploded the Ecumenical Patriarch would have been killed and much of the Patriarchate destroyed.

Bomb Explodes in Ecumenical Patriarchate Compound

NEW YORK -- A bomb was thrown into the compound of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and exploded on the roof of the Patriarchal Cathedral of St. George the Trophy-Bearer at midnight, Istanbul time (5 p.m. EST). The interior of the Church had not been inspected at the time of this report. The explosion shattered part of the roof, damaged metal gutters, hurled shrapnel around the courtyard and shattered numerous windows. His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew was not in the compound at the time of the explosion. Although no one was in the courtyard at the time of the explosion, the Tritevon, Reverend Deacon Nektarios, was severely injured by shrapnel and glass shards that penetrated the windows in the office across, where he was working. First reports are that he is in serious condition, but he is expected to recover. A previous attack in September of 1996 also damaged the Cathedral of St. George, but no one was injured.

Human Right Internet: The United Nations Human Rights System. Retrieved on 2006-11-28

"The Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople has been the target of bomb attacks (in 1993, 1994, 1996, 1997, 1998, 2004), desecration of patriarchal cemeteries and personal assaults against the Ecumenical Patriarch."

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew target of assassination plot

Oslo, Norway

11/3/2008

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=276>

IN THE NEWS - A court case reveals 86 members, ranging from the Turkish police, army, business, politics, and the mass media, who are alleged in a plan to assassinate the Ecumenical Patriarch, along with the murder of two Turkish Christians. The case points to a secret, ultra-nationalist organization (Ergenekon) in the upper levels of Turkish

government as a driving force in religious oppression. This is addressed in this originally published article, "Turkish nationalism, Ergenekon, and denial of religious freedom", by Forum 18's, Dr. Otmar Oehring of the Human Rights Office at Missio, the Pontifical Mission Society.

Rogue Group of Retired Turkish Officers Planning Assassination of His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

7/26/2007

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=169>

A network of Turkish retired officers was planning even the murder of Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomew according to investigations conducted by Turkish judicial authorities. The network was dismantled last month when weapons and explosives were found near in a hovel near Konstantinopolis. "Aksam" newspaper says that evidence on the planning of Ecumenical Patriarch Vartholomew assassination was found in the hard disc of the "National Forces Union" president, Bekir Ozturk. The same organization seems to have been planning assassinations of the Armenian Patriarch and Jewish businessman, Isaac Alaton, whose partner Gary was murdered under unknown conditions.

Bekir Ozturk was arrested within the framework of interrogations about the organization of retired officers who possessed an arsenal of grenades, bombs and other weapons taken from the army. The network of retired officers was cooperating with the nationalist organization " Movement of Patriotic forces and other 4 organizations. The organization was founded on December, 27, 2006 and has 105 offices in 40 districts and 600.000 members.

The ecumenical Patriarchate has in the past experienced grenade attacks, claimed by an organization called IBDA, believed to be of Islamic roots. However, grenades and explosives used in the attacks came from military warehouses and in some cases their serial numbers were recognized by NATO procedures.

According to "Aksam" newspaper judicial authorities have called security authorities and intelligence services to strengthen security of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Armenian Patriarch and Isaac Alaton.

A Plethora of Organized Efforts to Kill Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Other Christians

TURKEY: Turkish nationalism, Ergenekon, and denial of religious freedom

By Dr. Otmar Oehring, Head of the Human Rights Office of Missio

Article published October 21, 2008

A trial has begun in Turkey of influential people alleged to be part of an ultra-nationalist group, Ergenekon. Otmar Oehring of the German Catholic charity Missio notes, in a commentary for Forum 18 News Service, that opposition to religious freedom is widespread. Ergenekon members are alleged to have maintained deathlists of people, including Christians with a missionary background. The Malatya murder trial is revealing plausible links between Ergenekon, the "deep state" and the murders. But local officials – who are almost certainly not in an Ergenekon-type group – are also hostile to religious freedom. The Ergenekon case is part of a power-struggle between the "deep state" and the AKP government, but it is unclear whether the current trials will advance freedom of religion and belief. Given the threats to

the day-to-day security and religious freedom of non-nationalist Turks, whether the government effectively addresses the roots of these threats will be crucial.

A court case in Turkey has pointed to the existence of a secretive underground ultra-nationalist organisation Ergenekon, though this might merely be another name for the "deep state". The trial began near Istanbul on 20 October of 86 alleged members -- from the police, army, business, politics and the mass media - on charges that they were plotting to overthrow the current Justice and Development Party (AKP) government by 2009.

The "deep state" is the term used in Turkey for nationalist circles in the army, police, National Intelligence Organisation (MIT) secret police and state administration, which regard themselves as the custodians of the secularist legacy of the Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (see [F18News 28 June 2007](#)). The MIT closely monitors religious minorities, and some MIT officers do indeed believe in protecting religious minorities. But other MIT officers are staunch nationalists and fully part of the "deep state" (see [F18News 10 July 2007](#)).

Opposition to religious freedom is widespread among the "deep state" and wider sections of political life and the general public. This hostility has resulted in deaths and violent attacks, and has not been effectively addressed by the government (see [F18News 15 April 2008](#)).

The anti-religious minority views of ultra-nationalist circles and the "deep state" were no secret, especially to the religious minorities themselves. But reports in the Turkish media about Ergenekon have, perhaps for the first time, given the wider Turkish public the details of the conspiracies. Many Turkish analysts think that the allegations made so far will turn out to be true.

Members of Ergenekon are alleged to have maintained lists of people -- including Christians with a missionary background - targeted for killing. The involvement of Ergenekon has been alleged in the murders of Catholic priest Fr Andrea Santoro in Trabzon in February 2006 and three Protestants - Necati Aydin, Tillman Geske and Ugur Y ksel - in Malatya in April 2007. The MIT secret police is known to have maintained observation of the places where all four of these Christians were killed (see [F18News 10 July 2007](#)).

The trial of those accused of the Malatya murders is revealing that there may be links between Ergenekon, the "deep state" and the murders. As Christian news service Compass Direct reported on 21 October, the lawyer Orhan Kemal Cengiz, who leads the legal team representing the victims' families, states that there is a "very dark, complex, sophisticated web of relations behind the scenes."

Indeed, the Ergenekon people not only seem to be the masterminds of the Santoro and Malatya murders (and of the murder of ethnic Armenian journalist Hrant Dink), they even had a plan to kill the Ecumenical Patriarch -- or at least to incite his murder in a way that could not be traced back to them.

Among those arrested in the investigation against Ergenekon was ultranationalist lawyer Kemal Kerincsiz. As well as filing complaints against numerous writers for "insulting Turkishness" under the notorious Article 301 of the Penal Code, he also brought a high-profile case of "insulting Islam" under the same Article against Hakan Tastan and Turan Topal, Turks who joined a Protestant church.

Even the so-called Turkish Orthodox Church -- which has almost no followers and was apparently designed by its founders as an irritant to the Greek Orthodox Ecumenical Patriarchate -- is revealed to have been closely linked with such circles. This "church" has been publicly supportive of Kerincsiz's claims that Turkish Christians "insult Turkishness".

Ergenekon is said to have used "Turkish Orthodox Church" buildings, and to be closely linked with those who run this "church".

Ergenekon-style nationalists are certain that almost everyone is against the Turks and Turkishness. Particular enemies of Turkey are thought by these circles to be all of Turkey's ethnic minorities, particularly Kurds (some of whom are Alevi Muslims), as well as non-Muslim minorities. These views have long been widespread even outside Ergenekon-type circles (see [F18News 29 November 2007](#)).

Ergenekon-type circles collected information on groups within these populations -- it helped that they had close ties to authorities with access to the personal data registry which records individuals' ethnic and religious affiliation. It is not known if Ergenekon itself -- if it existed in the form that is claimed - sent spies into religious minority communities.

However, all religious minorities -- especially Christians -- have long had unknown people visiting their services. Sometimes these visitors say they are there from the MIT secret police to "protect" them, though more often they refuse to explain who they are (see [F18News 26 July 2006](#)).

Religious minorities doubt whether the police or MIT secret police would really attend their places of worship to protect them: they are more likely to believe they are there to listen, watch and take notes. Even this year in 2008, believers leaving services are asked who they are and why they have attended. The authorities want to know whether those attending Christian churches are foreigners, local "foreigners" or possible converts. Ergenekon could have played a part in such enquiries.

Many religious leaders have long been under surveillance by the MIT secret police. "Walls have ears," is the constant refrain in religious minority headquarters. Particularly close tabs were kept on Armenian Patriarch Mesrop Mutafyan, who had two "bodyguards" from the secret police with him constantly.

Again it remains unclear if this surveillance is to protect them or to keep tabs on all their activity. That a grenade could have been thrown into Patriarch Bartholomew's office from a small street outside the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul's Fener district - which is under full and very visible police surveillance - shows that any "protection" is at best ineffectual. Those charged with protecting religious leaders have not managed to stop threats against them.

Religious minority leaders live with threats constantly, whether through the media or directly. Patriarch Mesrop would receive about 300 emailed threats each day -- whether from one individual or many is unknown. Unknown people watch religious minority buildings, making sure they are seen and noticed by the religious minorities.

Perhaps the biggest impact so far of this constant atmosphere of threats is on the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate, Turkey's biggest Christian denomination. Mesrop Mutafyan, who was elected Patriarch in 1998 against the express wishes of the Turkish authorities, has been forced to retreat into health-related seclusion. Many believe the severe health problems he is suffering -- which have affected him both physically and mentally - are akin to post-traumatic stress disorder. They believe these have been brought on by years of pressure from the media, the public and from the Armenian diaspora, some of which has dubbed him a traitor. As well as opposing his original election, the Turkish authorities also made trouble for him over the restoration of the Patriarchate several years ago.

Should Patriarch Mesrop not recover and be in a position to take up his functions again, this could threaten the future of the Armenian Church in Turkey. The Turkish authorities are likely to insist -- as they have done up to now -- that the head of the Armenian (as well as the Greek Orthodox) Patriarchate must be a Turkish citizen resident in Turkey. The

Armenian Church may struggle to find a candidate with the diplomatic and linguistic skills and the international experience for such a crucial role in such a delicate and exposed position. This problem is of importance not just for the Church but for the Armenian community as a whole.

However, it is clear that Ergenekon and the "deep state" are not the only obstacle for freedom of religion or belief. Local officials -- who are almost certainly not in an Ergenekon-type organisation -- continue to obstruct the work of non-Muslim communities. This can clearly be seen when it comes to property disputes.

Roman Catholics, for example, face several difficult property battles, most notably in the southern coastal city of Mersin, where they have a large compound which they have used since Ottoman times. The only document the Catholics have confirming their ownership is a firman (decree) issued by the Ottoman sultan, which the local authorities do not consider is valid. Successive court cases brought by the local authorities in the 1980s finally reached Turkey's Supreme Court in Ankara in the 1990s, which ruled in favour of the Catholics.

Such ownership problems are faced by all the minorities, despite their widely differing legal status. As is the case with all non-Muslim minority groups, Catholics do not legally exist. Furthermore, as their properties are not organised as "community foundations", their properties have no legal personality on their own. And as the Catholics do not legally exist, the government at times argues that they therefore also cannot have property. This shows that despite government claims, these property problems have not been resolved by the latest Foundations Law (see [F18News 13 March 2008](#)).

In the case of the Catholics of Mersin, the local authorities re-started the dispute through the courts, in a case that is now pending at the High Court. Catholics fear a negative ruling, which would force them to take their case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg. This would be extremely expensive and time-consuming, even though this may turn out to be the only effective way for religious minorities to secure freedom of religion or belief (see [F18News 18 January 2007](#)).

The authorities in Mersin argue that the Ottoman firman only allows Catholic people to construct a specific building (a church) and did not grant them ownership of the land on which it was built. Similar court cases were brought in the past over the Assumptionist Church in Kadikoy, Istanbul (ECHR case No. 26308/95).

The Mersin authorities' desire to confiscate Catholic property would leave the community with nowhere to worship, though it remains unclear how far the authorities would go. They could take away legal ownership, while allowing the Catholics to continue to use the church. In the past, authorities elsewhere have used such methods to confiscate religious property "legally".

Another example is in Adana. The town's Jesuit-run Catholic church has long faced harassment from local people attending a nearby wedding hall, which was built close to it in defiance of regulations. The mayor's office has said that the wedding hall should be closed but has taken no action to enforce this.

Ancient cemeteries where Christians are buried -- such as in Samsun -- or Christian sections of bigger cemeteries -- as in Ankara - are also not being protected from vandalism, despite requests from the Christian Churches. In the Black Sea port of Trabzon -- where Fr Santoro was murdered - the Christian cemetery is threatened with confiscation. Muslim cemeteries face no such problems.

By contrast, spokespersons for the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate have pointed to two positive developments. They

welcomed the January 2008 statement in parliament by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that the issue of whether its Patriarch, Bartholomew, is "Ecumenical" or not is an "internal" matter for the Patriarchate and that the state should not interfere. Previously the authorities have responded ferociously to any claims that Bartholomew's religious role extends beyond Istanbul's tiny surviving Greek Orthodox community.

Greek Orthodox spokespersons also welcome the July 2008 ruling by the ECHR in Strasbourg over the Buyukada orphanage, particularly the finding that not only does the property belong to the Orthodox Patriarchate but that the Patriarchate is an existing legal person ([application no. 14340/05](#)).

Erdogan's statement about the title "Ecumenical" is likely to have little immediate impact on the general public, which continues to regard the Patriarchate with suspicion or hostility. The ECHR ruling should have an impact on other religious communities which have so far struggled to assert their right to a legal existence.

Meanwhile a new party, the Law and Equality Party (Hak ve Esitlik Partisi), was created on 4 September to promote a nationalist agenda. The party, founded by a former general prominent in the war against the PKK Kurdish rebels, is also aimed at getting rid of Christians and ending Christian proselytism. The first sentence of the call to found the party -- published as a full-page advertisement in many newspapers - attacks what it calls the "colonisation" of Turkey by missionaries, presumably Christian. "Turkish nation -- we know that you are fed up that your democracy is treated like a child, that foreign representatives and missionaries run around on our soil and boss you around," it reads.

Although the party seems to be well-organised in Turkey's provinces, it remains unclear how serious it is and how many votes it might be able to gather in an election. Nevertheless, the party reflects more widely-held chauvinist views, which see no place in Turkey for non-Muslim minorities (see [F18News 29 November 2007](#)).

Public opinion in Turkey is becoming more hostile to freedom of religion or belief, and increasingly favours extreme nationalism of the Ergenekon kind. The government's actions are favourable to these kinds of views -- even if not to the Ergenekon group itself -- and it does not seem to want to act effectively to protect non-nationalist Turkish citizens. The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) is not itself an extreme nationalist party, but it could do much more to make it unambiguously clear that religious and ethnic minorities are Turkish citizens with equal rights.

The AKP itself is under threat from Ergenekon-style views; indeed, those associated with the "deep state" recently tried to have the AKP banned. A fight is underway between the Army and the old Kemalist "deep state" on one side and the AKP on the other. But it is not at all clear that the AKP is necessarily in this fight to advance democratic values, including freedom of religion and belief.

It also remains unclear whether the AKP will prevail. Visits by members of the General Staff to Ergenekon prisoners ahead of the trial have been interpreted as a warning to the AKP not to go too far.

The court case against alleged key leaders and members of Ergenekon is merely the latest step in the power-struggle between the "deep state" (of which Ergenekon appears to have been a part) and the AKP. That the judiciary -- quite obviously pushed by the government -- has initiated the court case can be seen as proof that the AKP government is fighting back against those groups in society and state that are striving to drive the AKP from power.

Whether the Ergenekon court case will prove to be a step towards real democracy in Turkey -- leading to improvements in the area of freedom of religion and belief -- is quite another question. It is not only the court cases on Ergenekon and the Malatya murders which will decide this. Given the undeniable threats to the day-to-day security and religious

freedom of Turks who are not nationalists, whether the AKP government effectively addresses the roots of these threats will be crucial in deciding this question.

Continued Intimidation and Harassment by Istanbul Official Targeting Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

8/24/2005

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=83>

ANKARA - The Greek Orthodox faithful in Turkey have 79 churches, 72 of them in Istanbul, reported Interior Minister Abdulkadir Aksu yesterday.

Aksu (pictured right) supplied the figures in response to Motherland Party (ANAVATAN) Istanbul Deputy Emin Sirin (pictured left), who, dissatisfied with a previous question on why the the activities of Fener Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos aren't scrutinized under the Treaty of Lausanne, sent another motion to the Interior Ministry under right to information laws.

Sirin stressed that the patriarch has attended religious ceremonies, opened churches with religious ceremonies, participated in visits, receptions, celebrations, funerals, and religious tourism activities so far in Yalvac, Isparta, Avanos, Zelve, and Urgup in Nevsehir, Silivri in Istanbul, and Selcuk in Izmir.

In reply to Sirin's motion, Aksu explained that the Culture and Tourism approves the patriarch's movements related to religious tourism and religious ceremonies and the relevant governors' offices refer the matter to the General Directorate of Security. He added that the necessary measures are taken.

Explosive device at Patriarchate an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police say

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=43>

3/3/2005

News Thursday 3, March 2005

Explosive device at Patriarchate an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police say

ANKARA (ANA - A. Abatzis) The explosive device found in the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Fanar and neutralised by a Turkish bomb squad earlier on Saturday was an armed hand-grenade, Turkish police reported.

According to an ANA correspondent in Ankara, the unexploded grenade was spotted on the roof of St. George's Church within the Patriarchate grounds by a crew of window-cleaners.

Turkish police said the grenade may have been thrown any time in the past month but went unnoticed because it did not explode.

The Ecumenical Patriarchate has been the target of similar attacks several times in the past, with grenades lobbed from the area behind the grounds and always landing near the same spot on the roof of the church. Past attacks have been accompanied by explosions.

Commenting from Athens, Greek foreign ministry spokesman George Koumoutsakos unequivocally condemned the incident and said that Greek diplomatic and consular authorities in Ankara and Istanbul had

already conveyed their deep concern over the incident to Turkish authorities and asked for stronger security measures around the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Terrorist Bomb Explodes at Ecumenical Patriarchate

Associated Press, Istanbul, Turkey
10/7/2004

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=21>

Explosion Damages Istanbul Cathedral

An explosion shattered windows at the seat of the spiritual leader of the world's Orthodox Christians in Istanbul on Thursday, officials said. There were no reports of injuries.

The blast struck the roof of the Cathedral of St. George, shattering windows there as well as in the main building of the Ecumenical Patriarchate complex, a Patriarchate official said on condition of anonymity.

A terrorism police squad was investigating the cause of the blast, police officials said.

The blast came weeks after police clashed with hundreds of rock-throwing nationalist Turks who staged a protest outside the Patriarchate and burned an effigy of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I, whom far-right groups accuse of working against Turkish interests.

Archbishop Demetrios Condemns Hostile Demonstrations Against Our Ecumenical Patriarchate

10/30/2005

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=104>

NEW YORK - Archbishop Demetrios of America has expressed his deepest sorrow and his strong and unequivocal condemnation for the most recent hostile demonstrations and threats against the holy center of world Orthodoxy, the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, in Istanbul, Turkey.

This latest assault took place last Thursday, October 28, when groups of Turkish nationalists and other extreme elements demonstrated in Phanar against the Ecumenical Patriarchate chanting slogans such as "one night we'll come to the Phanar," "go away Patriarch," "Patriarch don't test our patience," "take the Patriarchate and go to Greece," and the like. Before police intervened, the angry demonstrators reached the entrance to the Patriarchal compound, and placed a black wreath in front of the gate.

Archbishop Demetrios in his statement of condemnation said, "I express my deepest sorrow for the events that transpired outside of our Ecumenical Patriarchate last Thursday. The actions of these Turkish extremists-nationalists are appalling and condemnable in and by any civilized country. These are actions against a holy institution which survived and lives on through the centuries. It's an institution highly respected by the entire civilized world. These demonstrators are short changing themselves and Turkey, as they paint a picture of uncivilized, petty, narrow-minded people."

"As a Church and as Orthodox in America, we are in spirit and in prayer by the side of our Ecumenical Patriarchate, and we stand in full support with love and care towards our Mother Church as we are reassured that He Who has many times saved this Patriarchate and has protected it in difficult times will once again be

next to our Ecumenical Patriarch and the Fathers of the Great Church of Christ and He will lead this crisis to a favorable result according to the teachings of our Lord, that God, 'will not break a bruised reed, and smoking flax He will not quench, till He sends forth justice to victory' (Matt. 12:20)."

Serbian Orthodox Church Expresses Concern Over Activities of Extremist Groups in Turkey Against Ecumenical Patriarchate

11/7/2005

<http://www.archons.org/news/detail.asp?id=106>

Solidarity with Patriarchate of Constantinople

The Assembly is also disturbed by frequent libelous assaults against certain institutions of the Serbian Orthodox Church, which are groundlessly and irresponsibly accused of hiding persons indicted for war crimes. The members of the Assembly reacted similarly to the slander and attacks by extremist groups in Turkey against the Patriarchate of Constantinople and His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I. The Assembly firmly hopes that the state institutions of the Republic of Turkey, clearly oriented toward a European future, will offer adequate protection and legal security to the Orthodox Church, other Christian churches, and all minority communities on its territory.

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

BY HIS EMINENCE ARCHBISHOP SPYRIDON

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

<http://www.goarch.org/news/goa.news660>

His Eminence Archbishop Spyridon of America strongly condemned this latest criminal act of the bombing of the Ecumenical Patriarchate headquarters in Istanbul, Turkey, on December 3, 1997.

Upon reflecting on this act of terror, the serious wounding of a clergyman, and the destruction of property of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, His Eminence said:

"Six weeks after he received the Congressional Gold Medal, the Ecumenical Patriarch was threatened by a bomb blast directed at him and his Church. This is unacceptable.

At the dawn of the 21st century, it is inconceivable that the basic human rights, such as the freedom of worship, the ability to live a peaceful life according to the law of one's country, and the freedom to live without the constant fear of having ones life and property destroyed without cause, are still abused and denied in countries such as Turkey.

How can a person claim for himself to be civilized, to be peace-loving, to be respectful of human rights and to be treated as part of the civilized world when his own actions violate these universally accepted tenets of humanity.

I condemn all violence and persecution of human beings everywhere, for every person is gifted by God with dignity, honor, and the right to live a peaceful life.

It is the responsibility of the Government of Turkey to provide safety and security for all of her citizens, and to seriously obey the international rules which govern a civilized society.