

Violations of international human rights standards on freedom of religion in Turkey



David Klein

Otmar Oehring and Güzide Ceyhan

Ahead of the UN Human Rights Council May 2010 Universal Periodic Review of Turkey, Forum 18 News Service has found that the country continues to see serious violations of international human rights standards on freedom of religion or belief.

A long-standing crucially important issue, with many implications, is that Turkey has not legally recognised religious communities in their own right as independent communities with full legal status – such as the right to own places of worship and the legal protection religious communities normally have in states under the rule of law. Additionally, the most dangerous threat to individuals exercising freedom of religion or belief has been a series of violent attacks and murders on those perceived as threats; in recent years the victims have been Christians. Turkish citizens have argued to Forum 18 that the protection of the right of all to freedom of religion or belief, as laid down in the international human rights standards which Turkey is party to, should be the standard used by the authorities in all affected fields. They also argue that the authorities act against the intolerance fuelling violent attacks and murders.

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