

TURKEY: European Parliament urges Turkey to guarantee religious freedom and to release Pastor Andrew Brunson

HRWF (09.02.2018) – <http://bit.ly/2EQyrDs> – On 8 February, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on the current situation of human rights in Turkey. A section was devoted to religious freedom:

Whereas despite the fact that the Turkish Constitution provides for the freedom of belief, worship, and the private dissemination of religious ideas, and prohibits discrimination on religious grounds, religious minorities still face verbal and physical attacks, stigmatisation and social pressure at school and in public life, discrimination and problems regarding the ability to legally establish a place of worship;

The European Parliament notes with concern the deterioration of Turkey's long-held secularist principles and values; is seriously concerned about the lack of respect for the freedom of religion, including the increased discrimination against Christians and other religious minorities; condemns the confiscation of 50 Aramean churches, monasteries and cemeteries in Mardin; calls on the Commission to urgently address these issues with the Turkish authorities; urges the Turkish Government to release pastor Andrew Brunson and to allow him to return home.