



Greek, Cypriot American Groups Applaud Passage of Titus Amendment

The American Hellenic Institute (AHI), International Coordinating Committee-Justice for Cyprus (PSEKA), and American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association (AHEPA) applauds the House of Representatives for passing and incorporating amendment #579 into the FY22 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) [H.R. 4350]. The amendment, introduced by Congresswoman Dina Titus (D-NV), a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and active member of the Congressional Hellenic Caucus, requires that the State Department issue a report to Congress on the activities of the Grey Wolves, a Turkish ultranationalist and Islamist group, against the United States and its partners, including an assessment of whether the Grey Wolves meet the criteria to be designated as a foreign terrorist organization (FTO).

According to the amendment, the Secretary of State will be required to determine “whether the Grey Wolves meet the criteria for designation as a foreign terrorist organization as set forth in section 219 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 17 1189), and should be designated as such.” Should the Secretary of State choose not to designate the Grey Wolves as a terrorist organization, a “detailed justification” would have to be provided to the Congress.

The Grey Wolves are a neo-fascist group which targets, and at times engages in, violence against ethnic minorities in Turkey, including Kurdish, Armenian, Greek, and other ethnic minorities. The organization regularly threatens the livelihood of the Ecumenical Patriarch, including organizing rallies in which the Patriarch is burned in effigy, and promoting petitions to have the Patriarch removed from Constantinople (Istanbul). In 1981, a member of the Grey Wolves was implicated in a failed assassination attempt of Pope John Paul II. Even more concerning, the Grey Wolves have well-documented ties to the Turkish government, in particular its intelligence agency, and are closely connected to President Erdogan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP). In 2020, France banned the Grey Wolves organization.

This amendment is truly significant because it is the first measure that has ever been taken to hold Turkey accountable for its support for extremist and radical Islamist terrorist organizations under the reign of its President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. For too long, Turkey and its lobbyists have propagated the deceptive narrative that Turkey is a reliable, western-oriented NATO ally, assisting the United States in the war on terror. On the contrary, Turkey has a well-documented history of ties to ISIS and openly supports Hamas, a U.S. designated terrorist organization that seeks the destruction of U.S. ally Israel. Furthermore, Turkey has undermined U.S. counter terror operations in Syria by illegally invading Northeast Syria in 2019 to attack the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a group which partnered with the United States to successfully destroy the Islamic State in Syria.

According to PSEKA President Phillip Christopher “PSEKA welcomes the passage of Congresswoman Titus’ amendment in the House of Representatives, and we hope for similar success in the U.S. Senate. The Greek and Cypriot American communities have known of Turkey’s radical Islamist and ultranationalist agenda for some time, having witnessed the destruction of over 500 churches and countless Christians symbols in occupied Cyprus. We are glad that the Congress is finally recognizing this reality, and taking measures to hold Turkey accountable.”

AHI President Nick Larigakis added, “AHI congratulates Congresswoman Titus for shepherding an amendment which will for the first time hold the Turkish government accountable for its relationship with extremist and radical Islamist groups. We hope that a corresponding amendment is passed and incorporated in the Senate NDAA, and that the Congresswoman’s amendment will be signed into law.”

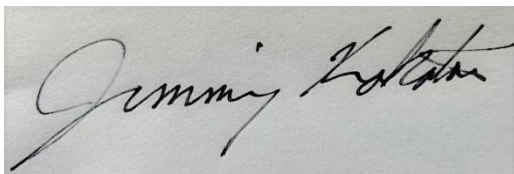
“As inherit in our organization’s founding, AHEPA condemns all forms of extremism wherever it shows its ugly face,” AHEPA Supreme President Jimmy Kokotas said. “The scrutiny and proper designation of the Grey Wolves’ extremist activities by the U.S. government is long overdue. We commend Congresswoman Titus for taking the lead as sponsor of this important amendment that, if enacted, will provide a much-needed assessment about this terrorist organization. We thank the House for passing the Titus amendment and call on the Senate to follow suit.”



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