



**LIGUE INTERNATIONALE POUR LES DROITS ET LA LIBERATION DES PEUPLES
INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR THE RIGHTS AND LIBERATION OF PEOPLES
LIGA INTERNACIONAL POR LOS DERECHOS Y LA LIBERACION DE LOS PUEBLOS**

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discrimination, xenophobia and all forms of
discrimination

PONTIANS

In his study (E/CN.4/2004/61) on contemporary forms of racism, discrimination and intolerance, the Special Rapporteur embarks in the difficult task of identifying and categorizing specific problems in different parts of the world. In his recommendations he justly points to the necessity of collecting pertinent information on cases of violence, discrimination and unfair violations of individual and collective rights.

The *International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples (LIDLIP)* would like to draw attention on some aspects of a subtle multifacet scheme of arbitrary measures, discrimination, intolerance, intimidation relevant to this agenda item which are incurred by a specific minority. This is the minority of Pontians in Turkey.

The historical settlement of the Pontians has been for past ages a region now in the Northern part of Turkey, a region between Samsun and Trabzon. Thousands have left their poor villages during last decades for big cities in Turkey or towards Europe. Most of the Pontians are muslims. All are very much attached to their language (which is ancient Greek), and to their identity of Pontians, while the Turkish authorities, adamant about Turkish nationhood, are resorting to various measures to bar this affirmation of their identity.

The right to education and to communication in their own language is denied to the Pontians in Turkey. There is no school where their language can be taught. Pontian children in public schools are subjected to intimidating, terrorizing measures (such as beating-up, and threats) to be kept from speaking their language. The access to higher education is quasi impossible to Pontian students in Turkey.

Intimidating measures are taken by the police against Pontian families who have migrant workers or students in Europe. A terrorizing method consists in spurious accusations of collaboration with Kurdish guerrilla, going as far as presenting forged evidence to that end. This kind of intimidation seems to be very effectful. We are informed that Pontian migrant workers living in Turkish quarters of German cities are led to take precautions to communicate between themselves by fear of Turkish neighbours and connections who can cause harm to their families far away in their villages.

Pontian families in Turkey having links in Greece seem to be particularly under surveillance. In November 2003 a group of Pontians in Trabzon who received a TV team from Athens, preparing a documentary film, was terrorized by the police, the film and the TV material being moreover sequestered.

Another case is that of a student of a university in Athens. He is named Fethi Gultepe, a Pontian from the region of Trabzon. In October 2003 he was travelling back home via Istanbul to visit his family and was arrested under the accusation of "attempting to establish a Pontian state". He was imprisoned in a prison of F type.

Given some readiness shown by the Turkish authorities to resort to accusations of challenging Turkey's territorial integrity before moves of or for Pontians, one could question the validity of claims against the student F. Gultepe, which are left unconvincing as yet. Based on their long-standing scheme of dealings with the Pontians, the case might well be merely a means of intimidation. The *International League for the Rights and Liberation of Peoples (LIDLIP)* submits to the Special Rapporteur this subtle scheme of discrimination and intimidation for consideration in his study or any further investigation deemed necessary.

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