



National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA

475 Riverside Drive, Suite 800, New York, NY 10115-0050 ■ www.nccusa.org
Office of the General Secretary ■ P: 212-870-2025 ■ F: 212-870-3112 ■ E: mkinnamon@nccusa.org

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His All Holiness BARTHOLOMEW

Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch
Rum Patrikhanesi,
342 20 Fener- Halic,
Istanbul.

Your All Holiness:

It is a pleasure to greet you on behalf of the 36 member communions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. Be assured that you are in our prayers each day, as well as in our affection, esteem and gratitude for your faithful leadership. Your efforts to bring all Christians closer together, your courageous support for justice for all people and the eloquence you have brought to cause of protecting God's beautiful creation are well known and much appreciated by your sisters and brothers in the United States and around the world.

We are, of course, aware of the often difficult circumstances which Your All Holiness and our Christian sisters and brothers face in Istanbul, where Christians compose a small minority of the population. We have been deeply concerned for your personal safety and we want you to know of our constant support. We have also grieved that some of the most precious elements of the spiritual lives of Christians in Turkey, including the Halki Seminary, have been summarily closed by the Turkish government. This is unconscionable for a church that represents the oldest of Christian traditions – a church that dates back to a time when Rome was governed by the Caesars. Indeed, we wish for you and Christians in Turkey and everywhere our faith is a minority the same safety and protection that the Prophet Mohammed promised Christians with his own hand and voice so many centuries ago.

We are expressing our concerns to the U.S. Secretary of State, advising her that it is the view of our member communions that the safety and freedom of the Ecumenical Patriarchate must be among the highest priorities of the U.S. foreign policy. This is a view we will invite all our members to express in their international outreaches, because we have learned over and over again that persecution of one group of Christians is an assault on all of us who proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord.

Grace to you, and Peace,

Michael Kinnamon
General Secretary