In Defense of Christians May 13, 2022

1023 15th Street NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20005

The Honorable Congressman Gregory Meeks

Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee

The Honorable Congressman Michael McCaul

Ranking Member, House Foreign Affairs Committee

The Honorable Congressman Adam Smith

Chairman, House Armed Services Committee

The Honorable Congressman Mike Rogers

Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee

Dear Congressional Leaders:

On behalf of In Defense of Christians (IDC) and its nationwide membership within your constituencies, we write to express our profound concern regarding recent reports that the U.S. State Department is actively considering the Republic of Turkey’s request to buy 40 Lockheed Martin-made F-16 fighter jets and nearly 80 advanced modernization kits for its existing warplanes.

In response to Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400s, the United States imposed sanctions on Turkey under the Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) less than two years ago. Despite CAATSA sanctions and its exclusion from the F-35 program, Turkey remains defiant, and even emboldened, in its acquisition of hostile weapon systems. Rather than seeking to mend its strained relationship with Washington, Ankara insists on keeping, and expanding, its inventory of Russian weapon systems.

Turkey experts convey serious concerns about co-locating upgraded F-16s in the same operational theater as Russian S-400s. Not a single Administration official or analyst has presented a scenario in which American technology is fully protected from co-location risks—specifically technological exploitation—inherent in American jets being co-located with hostile Russian anti-aircraft radar.

Selling Turkey new F-16s and advanced upgrade kits would undermine national security, American values and NATO interests. Turkey has already used its existing weapon systems to launch kinetic attacks against Christians and other ethno-religious minorities in Syria, Iraq, Armenia, and in the eastern Mediterranean. Turkish attacks on the final Christian towns in northern Syria and northern Iraq have brought Syriac-Assyrian-Chaldean Christians to the brink of extinction in their native homeland.

Turkey continues to violate the Geneva Conventions in prosecuting its military campaign against American partners on the ground in northern Syria. For nearly a decade, the Syriac (Christian) Military Council—who enabled the U.S.-led Coalition’s defeat of ISIS—has been among America’s closest allies on the ground in Syria. This battle-tested American partner is now being subjected to daily, unprovoked attacks by Turkey and Turkish backed jihadist militias, using American-sourced weapon systems. Now more than ever, standing firm with our local allies on the ground is essential in maintaining U.S. credibility.

Turkey’s defiance of American law and NATO interests cannot be ignored. While some might assert that excluding Turkey from the F-35 program was punitive enough, Ankara’s continued desire to purchase additional weapons from America’s enemies signals otherwise.  Access to America’s advanced weapon systems is a privilege that Turkey must earn, not a right to which it is entitled.

Any American arms sales to Ankara must, at an absolute minimum, be conditional and restricted to prevent their use against defenseless Christians and other ethno-religious minority communities. Overlooking this risk would be reckless and run counter to American values.

We urge you to consider legislative measures to prevent sales of new F-16s or upgrade kits unless and until Turkey demonstrates its unconditional compliance with CAATSA, and makes assurances that advanced American weapons technology will not be left vulnerable to Russian and Chinese exploitation.

The U.S. and NATO must stand against such bold defiance by Turkey. We urge you to apply the strictest scrutiny to any potential sale or transfer of any major weapon systems to Turkey. Turkey’s game is not merely reckless; it’s a very methodical and deliberate test of U.S. and NATO resolve.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Kindest regards,



Richard Ghazal

Executive Director