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September 21, 2026

The Honourable Maninder Sidhu
Minister of International Trade of Canada
Canada-Turkey Trade Consultations
Global Affairs Canada
Trade Negotiations Division (TCE)
111 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON K1N 1J1

Dear Minister Sidhu,

We are writing to you to express our concerns about free trade with Turkey.

While we support the Government's diversification regarding free trade and the creation of new trade partnerships, we are very skeptical about the proposed discussions with Turkey. In the past few months, we have written to Prime Minister Carney and Minister Fuhr, noting that Turkey is not a trusted partner nor does it share our principles and values. Copies of these letters are attached to this communication as Appendix A.

To briefly summarize, Turkey has undermined the European/NATO sanctions against Russia, occupies about 40% of Cyprus and has stationed over 40,000 military forces on the Island, contrary to UN Security resolutions, and constantly threatens Greek sovereignty. Turkey is also known to harbour, train and finance terrorists – Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Muslim Brotherhood - that have killed millions of people.

Any free-trade agreements that may be developed must have safeguards and must be closely monitored to ensure that Turkey complies with standards. Any products traded must be produced from mainland Turkey and not from occupied areas.

Yours Truly,

George Manios
President, Canadian Hellenic Congress

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APPENDIX A

1. Letter to Minister Stephen Fuhr, May 15, 2026
2. CHC Statement on Military-Industrial Cooperation and Free Trade, May 19, 2026
3. Letter to Prime Minister Mark Carney, June 24, 2026

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May 15, 2026

VIA EMAIL: stephen.fuhr@parl.gc.ca
The Honorable Stephen Fuhr
Secretary of State for Defense Procurement
House of Commons, Ottawa

Dear Minister Fuhr,

We are extremely concerned about your description of Turkey being a "trusted partner" and "valuable ally" during the discussions of expanding Canada-Turkey defense cooperation. On the contrary the opposite is true.

Turkey has undermined the Europe/NATO imposed sanctions on Russia; supports terrorism; occupies Cyprus; used illegally the Canadian technology (drone avionics) during the Nagorno-Karabakh war and in Syria killing thousands of innocent civilians and devasting the landscape; violating Greek sovereignty and are seeking half of the Aegean Sea and islands as its own. Turkey is known for violating human and religious freedoms, jailing journalists, political opponents and other critics.

These acts clearly show that Turkey is NOT a trustworthy partner. nor does it share our principles and values. Canada must be extremely cautious about renewing the military-industrial cooperation and even entering in a free trade deal with Turkey.

Canada does not need an authoritarian and brutal regime to develop a military industrial base. We should learn from our history: during WWII we produced artillery shells and a corvette a week. We have the resources and human expertise to go along without the help of an authoritarian regime.

Most of the Turkish military weapons are based on European and American systems, Let's look at our friends in Europe to develop partnerships since we share common values.

The Canadian Hellenic Congress strongly opposes Canada's developing and expanding military and trade ties with an authoritarian regime like Turkey.

Yours truly,

George Manios
President
Canadian Hellenic Congress

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May 19, 2026

Canadian Hellenic Congress strongly opposes Canada's expanding the military-industrial cooperation and free trade with Turkey

The recent visit to Turkey by the Honorable Stephen Fuhr, Secretary of State for Defense Procurement raises serious and profound concerns about the ethical and accountability of Canada's middle power foreign and cooperation policy with authoritarian states that do not respect the rule of law or international treaties.

On May 15, 2026, the CHC wrote to the Minister stating its concerns and opposition to the foreign policy direction that the Canadian government is pursing with respect to any authoritarian regime like Turkey.

The CHC notes several instances where Turkey is not a reliable or a trusted partner. For example, Turkey undermined the European/NATO sanctions against Russia; occupies about 40% of Cyprus and has stationed over 40,000 military forces on the island contrary to UN Security resolutions. They are also known to finance and train terrorists that have killed millions of people.

Over the years Turkey has repeatedly violated Greek Sovereignty bringing both countries to the brink of war. A few days ago, Turkey has sought to arbitrarily divide the Aegean Sea, hence de facto annexing Greek territory. This is against International law and the UN Charter.

"The notion that Turkey is a "trusted partner" and a "valuable ally" is far from the truth", said George Manios, President of the Canadian Hellenic Congress. "On the contrary Turkey has a history of gross violations of human and religious freedoms and does not respect the rule of law or international treaties" he added.

Canada's policy direction is ethically wrong and is flawed, is against our principles and values and raises profound ethical, security and accountability concerns.

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June 24, 2026

The Right Honourable
Mark Carney Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Carney,

On behalf of the Canadian Hellenic Congress (CHC), the national umbrella organization representing over 250,000 Greek Canadians, we write to express our profound concerns regarding the Government of Canada's recent discussions with the Republic of Turkey on deepening bilateral ties, particularly in the realms of defense cooperation, nuclear energy, and advanced manufacturing.

While we acknowledge the importance of strategic partnerships within the NATO framework, we urge your government to proceed with utmost caution and to steadfastly uphold Canada's longstanding commitments to human rights, international law, and ethical foreign policy.

The CHC has long advocated for policies that promote peace, democracy, and respect for human rights, drawing from the historical experiences of the Hellenic diaspora.

Our community remains deeply affected by Turkey's actions, including the 1974 invasion and ongoing occupation of Northern Cyprus, which has displaced thousands and violated international norms. These events, coupled with Turkey's broader human rights record, compel us to highlight the risks inherent in expanding cooperation without stringent safeguards.

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Recent reports underscore significant human rights issues in Turkey, including arbitrary killings, forced disappearances, torture, arbitrary arrests, and severe restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly.

Since the 2016 coup attempt, Turkish authorities have imprisoned over 95,000 citizens, dismissed tens of thousands of civil servants, and closed more than 1,500 nongovernmental organizations on terrorism-related grounds.

Journalists, human rights activists, and political opponents face routine harassment, with the government using broad anti terror laws to suppress dissent.

Religious and ethnic minorities, including Christians and Kurds, endure discrimination, vandalism of places of worship, and transnational repression.

Such abuses extend beyond Turkey's borders, with reports of kidnappings and intimidation of critics abroad.

Historically, Canada has demonstrated principled leadership by imposing arms export controls on Turkey in response to these concerns. In 2019, following Turkey's military incursion into northern Syria, Canada suspended new export permits due to risks of exacerbating regional instability and human rights violations. This embargo was extended in 2020 after credible evidence emerged that Canadian optical technology, integrated into Turkish drones, was diverted to Azerbaijan for use in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, contributing to civilian casualties and violations of international humanitarian law.

Despite these findings, the recent lifting of restrictions in exchange for Turkey's support of Sweden's NATO accession raises alarms about prioritizing alliance politics over human rights accountability.

Your government's expressed interest in defense collaboration, including aspects involving Turkish military technologies like drones and missiles, risks repeating past mistakes. Turkey's support for groups perpetrating abuses in conflicts, such as in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh, and its own operations against Kurdish populations, underscore the substantial risk of Canadian technology being misused.

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Furthermore, nuclear cooperation demands rigorous scrutiny, given Turkey's geopolitical tensions and history of non-compliance with international norms.

The CHC stands in solidarity with allied communities, including Armenian Canadians and Kurdish-Canadians, who have voiced similar apprehensions. We recall our joint statement in 2019 condemning Turkey's offensive in Rojava, which highlighted the threats to regional stability and minority rights. Canada's foreign policy and commitment to the Arms Trade Treaty obligate us to avoid complicity in such violations.

We advise the Government of Canada not to compromise on its previous positions. Maintain robust export controls, condition any cooperation on verifiable improvements in Turkey's human rights practices, and prioritize consultations with affected diaspora communities. Engaging Turkey without these measures could undermine Canada's global reputation as a defender of human rights and embolden authoritarian regimes.

The CHC is committed to constructive dialogue and stands ready to meet with your office to discuss these matters further. We trust that Canada will continue to lead with integrity on the world stage.

Sincerely,

George Manios

President

Canadian Hellenic Congress

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