



TAA Newsletter, Volume 5, Issue 2 February 2015

Dear Friends,

This month, 90 Members of the U.S. Congress responded to recent arrests of journalists and members of the media levied by the ruling party in Turkey by signing a letter showing "deep concern" to the U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry. Similarly, an opinion piece titled "Turkey's Eroding Democracy" illustrating a sharp decline regarding human rights, rule of law and press freedom was published in the Washington Post. The opinion piece, written by Fethullah Gulen -- a well-renowned Islamic scholar, also explains how Turkey's current regime has "alienated the west and is losing credibility in the Middle East", and the role its needs to play in "asserting positive influence" within Turkey and its neighboring regions. The government also recently took control of Bank Asya -- a move that has drawn huge criticism and backlash from Turkish citizens fearing the takeover would negatively impact Turkey's financial industry.

In other news, three Muslim students were killed at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. The Turkic American Alliance sends its deepest condolences to the families and friends of the deceased and stands in solidarity with the Muslim community in condemning such horrific acts of violence. February also marked the 23rd anniversary of the Khojaly Tragedy, which saw 600 people killed, and is one of the biggest tragedies of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. In commemoration, the Assembly of the Friends of Azerbaijan (AFAZ) held a reception in Washington D.C., attended by U.S. Members of Congress.

TAA attended annual Winter Meetings hosted by the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS), National Governors Association (NGA) and National Association of Attorney Generals (NAAG).

The Mid-Atlantic Federation of Turkic American Associations (MAFTAA) held a Legislative Reception in Richmond, including a State House Reception in Kentucky while the Council of Turkic American Associations (CTAA) celebrated its 4th annual Turkic Day Celebrations in Maine. Pacifica Institute opened a new branch in Seattle, Washington and its office in Utah was awarded the "Community Award" by the Salt Lake City Interfaith Roundtable. The Turkic American Federation of Southeast

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(TAFS) hosted a Turkish delegation at the Georgia Capitol and held its 1st Annual Turkish-Bahamian Friendship Reception in Bahamas,

[1st Annual Turkish-Bahamian Friendship Reception Held](#)

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We are very excited to be hosting our 5th Annual Turkic American Convention and Business Summit from March 17th-19th, 2015, in Washington D.C. This year's flagship event -- the first of its kind -- will comprise of leading international businesspersons and civic leaders from Far East to Africa. We will be holding a Gala Reception on March 18th from 6.30pm-9.00pm at the Willard Intercontinental Hotel.

To register, please visit www.turkicamericanconvention.org

I look forward to welcoming you at the convention.

Sincerely,

Faruk Taban, Ph.D.
President

U.S. Members of Congress Respond to Turkey's Press Freedom

February 2nd, 2015

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515
February 2, 2015

On February 2nd, 2015, 90 U.S. Members of Congress signed a letter to U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry responding to the current state of Press Freedom in Turkey and the recent arrests of members of the Turkish ... [Read More](#)

Fethullah Gulen: Turkey's Eroding Democracy



February 4th, 2015

Fethullah Gulen penned an opinion piece which appeared in the printed edition of The International New York Times on February 4, 2015. In this op-ed, Mr. Gulen touched on contemporary issues surrounding Turkish politics. He expressed his concerns regarding what he characterized as Turkey's deviation from the path of democracy, as well as ... [Read More](#)

Turkic Cultural Day Held at Maine State House

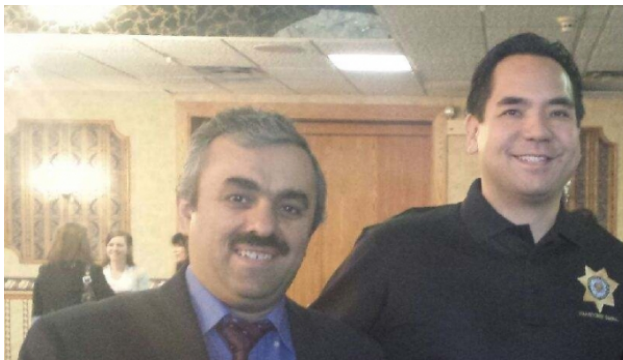
February 4th, 2015

On February 4th, 2015, The Turkish Cultural Center in Maine (TCC-Maine) celebrated its 4th Annual Turkic Cultural Day at the Maine State House. Over 150 people attended the reception throughout the day. Among the distinguished guests were Governor of Maine, Paul LePage; Senator Roger Katz; Representatives Jeff McCabe and Richard Farnsworth. The program began with a keynote speech by Governor LePage followed by remarks by Senator Katz and Eyup Sener, President of TCC-Maine, spoke



on behalf of the... [Read More](#)

Pacifica Institute Receives Community Award



February 5th, 2015

On February 5, 2015, Pacifica Institute received the "Community Award" in an annual award ceremony hosted by the Salt Lake Interfaith Roundtable in Utah. Josie Stone, Vice Chairwoman of the Utah Interfaith Roundtable presented the award and showed her appreciation. The guest speaker, Hon. Sean Reyes, Attorney General of Utah pointed out the value of religious dialogue and its contributions to improving public welfare. He explained further that th... [Read More](#)

Richmond Legislative Reception



February 18th, 2015

On February 18, 2015, The American Turkish Friendship Association(ATFA) and Mid Atlantic Federation of Turkic American Associations (MAFTAA) hosted the 7th Annual Turkish American Legislative Reception at the Library of Virginia. Members of the Turkish-American community volunteered to help ATFA & MAFTAA host another wonderful... [Read More](#)

TAA Attends NASS, NGA & NAAG Winter Meetings

February 10th-13th, 2015

On February 10-13, 2015, TAA participated in the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) Winter Conference in Washington, D.C. which brought together leaders from government and industry and also learn the latest state and federal developments. This year, Dr. Taban attended the NASS Award Luncheon, with Guest Speaker U.S. Senator Roy Blunt (MS), International Relations Committee Meeting and a Luncheon Featuring U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham (SC). TAA was invited to attend the National Governors Association (NGA) Meeting at the Washington, D.C. from February 20-23, 2015, where he met with governors from various states and discuss various issues... [Read More](#)



Pacifica Opens New Branch in Seattle



February 21st, 2015

On February 21, 2015, Pacifica Institute held a grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony in their newest center located in Northeast Philadelphia in Seattle, Washington. The Turkish community hosted a number of dignitaries, including several political and Turkish community leaders.

Distinguished guests included Claudia Balducci, Mayor of Seattle and Congressman Adam Smith (WA), each of whom offered brief remarks to those in attendance. ... [Read More](#)

1st Annual Turkish-Bahamian Friendship Reception Held



February 25th, 2015

On February 25, 2015, Dr. Taban, together with a Turkish delegation led by Hon. Ertugrul Gunay, Former Turkish Minister of Culture was welcomed at the Georgia Capitol as part of 6th Annual Turkish Day celebrations. During the visit, the Florida delegation also met with Georgia State Legislators before visiting the Istanbul Cultural Center in Flori ... [Read More](#)

Kentucky State House Reception

February 26th, 2015

On February 26, 2015, the Mid Atlantic Federation of Turkic American Associations (MAFTAA), in collaboration with the American Turkish Friendship Association (ATFA) hosted their Annual Turkish American Legislative Reception at the Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort, Kentucky. Among the distinguished guests were current and former members of the Kentucky General Assembly, including Senate President Robert Stivers, Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes (KY), and Former Congressman Ben Chandler (KY) were also in attendance. The reception also inclu... [Read More](#)



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