

Washington, D.C. (November 21, 2012) – Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.), co-chairs of the Congressional Caucus on Hellenic Issues, today condemned statements made by Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan regarding the developing situation in Israel and Gaza. After returning from negotiation talks in Cairo, Prime Minister Erdogan called Israel a “terrorist state” due to its efforts to end Hamas’ violence against Israeli citizens.

Congressman Bilirakis: “To imply that defending a country’s own citizens in the face of terror constitutes a ‘terrorist state’ is not only outrageous, but also undermines current peace negotiations. Israel is our most important and strategic ally in the Middle East, serving on the front lines against terrorism and weapons proliferation. Turkey should play a constructive role in pushing Hamas to end their attacks, not embolden them with regrettable statements.”

Congresswoman Maloney: “Turkey’s prime minister is absurd when he characterizes Israel’s efforts to defend its citizens from a barrage of deadly rockets and missiles as “terrorism.” No nation can tolerate having its citizens living in constant danger of missile attack and few nations would act with the restraint Israel has already demonstrated. Instead of encouraging Hamas to continue its attacks on Israel, Turkey should be helping to resolve the conflict in Gaza.”

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