



# On the Mark: Celebrating Hanukkah at the Turkish Consulate in New York

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The holiday of Hanukkah commemorates the miracle of the Maccabees who found only enough oil to light the Menorah for one day, yet the Menorah remained lit for eight days.

However, the Hanukkah Celebration at the Turkish Consulate in New York on the evening of Wednesday, December 21, 2022 was in many respects miraculous, and certainly beyond memorable. The evening program took place at the majestic new building which houses the Turkish Consulate in New York located near the United Nations.

The event was hosted by H.E. Hasan Murat Mercan, Ambassador of the Republic of Turkey to the United States, and Turkey's Consul General Reyhan Ozgur.

There were remarks by Turkey's Ambassador Mercan; Turkey's Consul General Ozgur; and Israel's Consul General, Asaf Zamir.

During the evening event, there was even a live stream from Turkey with Rabbi Ishak Haleva, the Chief Rabbi of Turkey (with the time difference, Chief Rabbi Haleva's remarks were streamed from Turkey at around 3 am Turkey time!).

In his remarks, Turkey's Ambassador Mercan, "called on the participants, in the spirit of the Festival of Lights, to combine their efforts for promotion of peace in the world, better

relations among our nations and combating hate wherever it exists".

Rabbi Marc Schneier, Rabbi of The Hampton Synagogue, officiated at the Menorah candle lighting (for the fourth night of Hanukkah).

Attendees (about 200 celebrating guests attended) at the event included members of the Turkish Jewish Community both from the US and Turkey, as well as leaders of the American and Turkish Jewish Communities, including Malcolm Hoenlein, former Executive Vice Chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations; Cheryl Fishbein, Chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York; Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Executive Vice President, New York Board of Rabbis; Deniz Baler Saporta, Executive Director of the Jewish Community of Turkey; and Roni Palti, President of the American Friends of Turkish Jewry.

There was delicious food and music - a true Hanukkah celebration - but if one looked around and thought about it, this was no ordinary Hanukkah party - the magnitude of this event was very evident.

The hope is that the hopeful and positive spirit of this event, and of the Hanukkah holiday, will continue to resonate and prosper in the days, months and years ahead.



**Top: The 150-year old Hanukkah Menorah, which now belongs to Jewish collector Thomas Gelb, was recovered from a synagogue in Prague burnt down by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Center: At a ceremony to celebrate Hanukkah hosted by the Turkish Embassy and Ambassador in Washington, DC and the Turkish Consulate and Consul General in New York, with about 200 guests and members of the American-Turkish-Jewish community also known as Sephardic Jews. Bottom: Lighting Hanukkah's four candles are from left: Israel's Consul General to New York, Asaf Zamir; Turkey's Consul General in New York, H.E. Reyhan Ozgur; Rabbi Marc Schneier, President of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding; and Turkey's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Hasan Murat Mercan.**  
Photos: Courtesy Turkey's House.