AN ANALYSIS OF THE MONTEBELLO STATEMENT OF THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION IN LIGHT OF THE TERRITORIAL CLAIMS OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA ON TURKEY

(ERMENİ DEVRİMCİ FEDERASYONU'NUN MONTEBELLO BİLDİRİSİNİN ERMENİ DİASPORASININ TÜRKİYE ÜZERİNDEKİ BÖLGESEL İDDİALARI IŞIĞINDA İNCELENMESİ)

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Abstract: *The demands contained in a statement issued by Regional Convention of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) of the Western United States, in Montebello on June 22, 2014 are significant as they reveal both the attitude of Armenian Diaspora towards Turkey and their political strategy. This article analyzes the aforementioned statement in terms of its relationship with the historic Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia and comments on the weak basis of the statement's content.*

Keywords: *Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF), Armenian Diaspora, Armenia, Turkey, 49th Regional Convention, Montebello, Armenian Relocation*

Öz: *Ermeni Devrimci Federasyonu'nun (ARF/Taşnak Partisi) Batı Amerika Bürosu 22 Haziran 2014 tarihinde ABD'nin Kaliforniya eyaletinin Montebello şehrinde bir bildiri yayımlamıştır. Söz konusu bildiride yer alan talepler, Ermeni Diasporasının Türkiye'ye ilişkin tutumunu ve siyasi stratejilerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu makale Montebello bildirisini Ermenistan Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi ile bağlantısı çerçevesinde değerlendirmekte, aynı zamanda bildirinin içeriğinin oturtulduğu temellerin zayıflığı hakkında yorum yapmaktadır.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Ermeni Devrimci Federasyonu (ARF), Ermeni Diasporası, Ermenistan, Türkiye, 49'uncu Bölgesel Kongre, Montebello, Ermeni Sevk ve İskanı*

INTRODUCTION

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) branch in the Western United States adopted a series of decisions and demands with unanimous vote in their 49th Regional Convention that was held on June 22, 2014 in Montebello, California.

The most striking aspect of the statement is the fact that it is written like an ultimatum. Since it contains similar demands, the Montebello Statement reminds us of the Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Armenia ratified on August 23, 1990 in the Armenian Parliament. In this respect, the statement is not merely reflecting the demands of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, but the demands put forth by Republic of Armenia in its declaration of independence as well.

The fourteenth paragraph of the Montebello Statement is similar to the 11th Article of Republic of Armenia's Declaration of Independence (henceforth to be referred to simply as the "Declaration of Independence"). The most relevant statement relating to Turkey in the Declaration of Independence is as follows:

> "The Republic of Armenia considers it a duty upon itself to achieve the international recognition of the genocide committed during 1915, in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia[1] as well as supporting of these efforts and the will standing behind the aim of having these demands recognized by Turkey."[2]

In the aforementioned declaration and ARF's statement, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, which was a part of the Ottoman Empire for six centuries and which remains as an integral part of the Republic of Turkey since its foundation in 1923, are referred to as "Western Armenia", in other words, both documents view part of the sovereign territory of the Republic of Turkey as an integral part of the Republic of Armenia.

1 Armenia (as per its Declaration of Independence) and the Armenian Diaspora quotes 19 provinces of Turkey as "Western Armenia" and regards this territory as Armenian soil.

2 "Armenian Declaration of Independence" (Government of the Republic of Armenia, August 23, 1990), http://www.gov.am/en/independence/

MONTEBELLO STATEMENT[3]

The statement which includes a list of demands was published by the ARF-aligned Asbarez[4] newspaper and translated into Turkish by the officials of the "Repair-Future" initiative.[5]

The leaders of the ARF have issued the demands summarized below in the name of the Armenians living in Western United States:

The Armenian Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia use the false pretext of an "Armenian genocide" as the starting point for all of their political demands.

• Recognition of Genocide and Restitution

ARTICLE No: 1 - "The Republic of Turkey must unequivocally acknowledge and bear the consequences of the Armenian Genocide planned and implemented by the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire from 1915-1919, continued to be perpetrated by the Kemalist Movement from 1920-1923, and leading to ethnic cleansing by its own predecessor regime of the modern Republic of Turkey from 1924-1937. The Republic of Turkey must take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution to the Armenian Nation for its Genocidal Crime Against Humanity."[6]

In the absence of a substantive arguments to establish the claims of ill-intent on the part of the Ottoman government officials regarding the relocation of Armenians in 1915 from areas designated as security zones in the east of the Ottoman Empire, where armed Armenian groups and a certain portion of the Armenian populace (willingly or unwillingly due to being coerced by armed Armenian groups) were aiding and abetting the Russian invading forces,[7] or elsewhere where they constituted a security risk for Ottoman military forces, nor proving with historic facts that those events fit the United Nations' definition of genocide as per the Convention of 1948, the Armenian Diaspora and the Republic of Armenia use the false pretext of an "Armenian genocide" as the starting point for all of their political demands.

3 The full text of the statement can be found in the Appendix section of this issue.

4 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide," *Asbarez*, June 22, 2014.

5 REPAIR – FUTURE Armenian-Turkish platform" is a project conducted by the French-Armenian NGO Yerkir Europe. This project aims to debate the Armenian-Turkish issues by allowing various people in the Turkish, Armenian and Armenian Diaspora civil societies to voice their standpoints.

6 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide."

7 Mehmet Perinçek, *Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden 150 Belgede Ermeni Meselesi* (İstanbul: Kırmızı Kedi Yayınevi, 2012), 141.

Some Armenian statesmen who lived in that period accepted legitimacy of the decisions taken by the Ottoman Empire in relation to the relocation. The report, of which a summary is given below, presented by Hovannes Katchaznouni, the first Prime Minister of the Armenian State which was established in July 1918, during a Dashnaktsutyun Party meeting held in Bucharest in 1923, emphasized that the Ottoman government was justified in relocating Armenians in 1915:[8]

> "The winter of 1914 and first months of 1915, were a period of excitement and hope for the Russian Armenians including the Dashnaktsutyun. We had embraced Russia wholeheartedly. Without any grounds to do so, we were caught up in an atmosphere of victory; in return for our loyalty, efforts and assistance, we were sure that the Russian Tsarist government was going to gift us an independent Armenia encompassing South Caucasus and Armenian vilayets to be liberated from Turkey. Our minds were foggy. By imposing our own desires onto others, giving great importance to empty promises of irresponsible people and with the impact of self-hypnosis we did not comprehend reality and got swept away in illusions… but the Turks knew what they were doing, and today there is no reason for them to have any regrets."[9]

Even though the forced migration process during the relocation were started in June 1915 and was halted due to harsh winter conditions in November 1915,[10] and the law of relocation was rescinded on February 21, 1916 with a royal decree,[11] it is claimed by the ARF that the migration process was continued without interruption from 1915 to 1919 and further during 1919-1923 until the foundation of the modern Republic of Turkey and continued further during the early years of the Republic. The statement further continues as if the world powers at the time did not exclude the warring parties from the 1948 Convention of Genocide. The ARF neglect to mention the fact that a noteworthy portion of the Ottoman Armenians were waging a war against their

8 Türkkaya Ataöv, *An Armenian Source: Hovannes Katchaznouni,* (Ankara: Ankara University Faculty of Political Science, 1985), 3–13.

9 Ovanes Kaçaznuni, *Taşnak Partisi'nin Yapacağı Bir Şey Yok* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2005), 4–5; *The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksoution) Has Nothing to Do Any More* (New York: Armenian Information Service, 1955).

10 Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, n.d.), 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Ottoman Empire, Ministry of Interior, n.d.), 57/273; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Ottoman Empire, Ministry of Interior, n.d.), 58/124; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Ottoman Empire, Ministry of Interior, n.d.), 58/161; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Ottoman Empire, Ministry of Interior, n.d.), 59/123; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Ottoman Empire, Ministry of Interior, n.d.), 60/190.

11 Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* 81.

own state (the Ottoman Empire) and its armies, that they fought alongside the Russian armies on the Eastern Front,[12] and later alongside the French armies in the south of the Ottoman Empire.[13] The ARF thus attempts to gloss over the military necessity underlying the Ottoman government's decision to relocate its Armenian subjects from areas designated as security zones.

In World War One, the Ottoman Armenians who engaged in war against their own state did exactly what was needed to aid Russian victory: holding down Ottoman units many times the size of the rebel forces, crippling military communications, forcing hundreds of thousands of refugees on to the roads to hinder army movements, and ultimately making the Ottomans abandon strategies that might have won the war in the East.[14]

Similarly, the support provided to the occupying French forces was expressed by Boghos Nubar Pasha (who acted as the leader of the "Armenian National Delegation" during the Paris Peace Conference of 1919-20) with the following words:

> "… In 1919 and 1920, when the Kemalists carried out an offensive against the French troops, the Armenians fought for France. This was also the case in Maras, Haçin, Pozantı and Sis (Kozan). The French were able to take over Antep thanks to the Armenians. That is the reason why Armenians are France's ally in Cilicia."[15]

I hold the opinion that the arguments put forth by the Armenian Diaspora reduce the value of the term "genocide" because their arguments fail to distinguish between the term "genocide" and the relocation of rebellious populations during wartime. The term "genocide" is a specifically defined legal term. It describes a crime specifically defined by the 1948 Genocide Convention and must be addressed accordingly. The existence of the crime of genocide can be legally determined only by the judges of a competent tribunal on the basis of the prescribed legal criteria and after a fair and impartial trial.[16]

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12 "Genelkurmay ATASE Arşivi" (Genelkurmay Başkanlığı, n.d.), No: ½, Kls:528, Dos:2061, Fih:21-18, No: 4/3671; Aram Turabian, *Les Volontaires Armeniéns Sous Les Drapeaux Français*, 1917, 6.

13 Yusuf Halaçoğlu et al., *Ermeniler: Sürgün ve Göç* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu yayınları, 2004), 141.

14 Justin McCarthy et al., *The Armenian Rebellion at Van* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006), 250–51.

15 Halaçoğlu et al., *Ermeniler: Sürgün ve Göç*, 137; "US Archives," n.d., T1192, Roll 4, 860J.01/431.

16 Pulat Tacar and Maxime Gauin, "State Identity, Continuity, and Responsibility: The Ottoman Empire, the Republic of Turkey and the Armenian Genocide: A Reply to Vahagn Avedian," *The European Journal of International Law* 23, no. 3 (n.d.): 825.

To term the events of 1915 as genocide is to detach genocide from its legal definition and to use it for political or moral purposes. Whether it is sound to keep hammering on a legal term based on non-legal considerations is doubtful. It adds to a wrong conceptualization of the legal system and eventually could lead to a devaluation of the norm itself.[17]

This principle of law was confirmed by the decision of Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) in the case of Perinçek vs. Switzerland case:

> "…Not only was the Court [EChHR] not required to determine whether the massacres and mass deportations suffered by the Armenian people at the hands of the Ottoman Empire from 1915 onwards could be characterised as genocide within the meaning of that term in international law; it also had no authority to make legally binding pronouncements, one way or the other, on this point."[18]

However, the lobbying groups on behalf of the Armenian Diaspora and some of their allies have deliberately sought to avoid discussions relating to the legal aspects of this issue, because they are probably aware of the fact that it would weaken their genocide claims that they aim to impose through having parliaments pass resolutions or laws recognizing the events of 1915 as genocide. They have chosen to adopt a dogmatic political approach to underline the tragic nature of the incidents so that they can make genocide claims more easily acceptable to the public.[19]

• Redrawing the Borders

ARTICLE No: 3 - "Restitution of territorial property rights of the Armenian Nation shall include the redrawing of international borders on the basis of the final and binding Arbitral Award of United States President Woodrow Wilson issued on November 22, 1920, including but not limited to reunification with the Republic of Armenia of the territories and provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzurum and Trabzon[20] to

17 Tacar and Gauin, ""State Identity, Continuity, and Responsibility…," 123.

18 "Perinçek v. Switzerland [GC] - 27510/08 - Judgment 15.10.2015 [GC]" (European Court of Human Rights, October 15, 2015), https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":["002-10930"]} (Legal summary of the Grand Chamber's verdict regarding the Perinçek v. Switzerland Case)

19 Tacar and Gauin, "State Identity, Continuity, and Responsibility…," 824; Gündüz Aktan, "The Armenian Problem and International Law," n.d., http://web.itu.edu.tr/~altilar/tobi/e-library/TheArmenians/InternationalLaw.pdf

20 The names of provinces refer to the Ottoman provincial divisions. According to the provincial partition of Republic of Turkey, these provinces includes 20 cities of current day Turkey.

provide unrestricted access to the Black Sea, as well as the regions of Kars and Ardahan from within the borders of the First Independent Republic of Armenia, and including Mount Ararat and its surrounding territories."[21]

ARF's statements on the matter reveal their political strategy to have the 1920 Treaty of Sèvres implemented. This treaty (which was actually not ratified by the Ottoman government) was to be enacted in the aftermath of World War One with the intention of partitioning the remainder of the Ottoman Empire among the victorious powers, with provisions given to the Armenians and Greeks for states in Anatolia. Consequently, such a strategy could potentially result in the destabilization of regional peace.

The current strategy of the Armenian Diaspora, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, and the Republic of Armenia is rested in the century goal of a state with vast lands stretching all the way from the Caspian Sea, where lies considerable oil riches of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the Black Sea to the Mediterranean coasts of present-day Turkey. Such lands would give enormous strategic value to this hypothetical Armenian state.

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On the official website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (besides the reference to "Western Armenia" in Armenia's Declaration of Independence), there are multiple references to "Western Armenia",[22] which is imagined by the ARF and other nationalist Armenians to stretch from the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea to the coasts of the Black Sea and overlaps with the Eastern Anatolian territory of the Republic of Turkey.

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21 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide."

22 Please see these examples: "Genocide," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Armenia*, accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.mfa.am/en/what-is-genocide/; "Cultural Genocide," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Armenia*, accessed September 26, 2017, http://mfa.am/en/cultural-genocide/ ; "History," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Armenia*, accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.mfa.am/en/armenia-history/#armenia ; "The Crime of Genocide: Prevention, Condemnation and Elimination of Consequences," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs the Republic of Armenia*, accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.mfa.am/u_files/file/the_crime_of_genocide.pdf

Furthermore, the political elite of Armenia continue to this day to remain ambiguous[23] about whether the Republic of Armenia recognizes its borders with the Republic of Turkey, and thus refuse to explicitly state that Armenia recognizes Turkey's territorial integrity. Two clear examples of this are the issuance of the "Pan-Armenian Declaration on the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide" and Shavarsh Kocharyan's (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia) refusal to make a statement about Armenia recognizing its borders with Turkey.

The Pan-Armenian Declaration was "ceremoniously issued by the President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan" in January 2015, and makes references to the "the Treaty of Sèvres[24] and US President Woodrow Wilson's Arbitral Award (which aimed to give a large part of the Ottoman Empire's territories to Armenians, territories in which Armenians had never been anywhere near a majority)."[25] One month after the issuance of the Pan-Armenian Declaration, Shavarsh Kocharyan, in a TV show airing in Armenia, refused to answer the following question posed by the TV show's host, "Does Armenia recognize Turkey's borders or not?" and diverted the discussion when the show's host insisted on getting an answer to his question.[26]

All of these show the extent to which the Republic of Armenia desires to flout international law related to the inviolability of national borders if given the opportunity. Without any substantive logical arguments, both Armenia and ARF claim that the Republic of Turkey illegally occupies what they term "Western Armenia." By considering a part of the sovereign territory of Turkey as "Western Armenia", the government of Armenia is in violation of Chapter I, Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations that instructs "all members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."[27]

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23 Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun, "The Art Of Dodging The Question," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Commentary No: 2015 / 36, March 19, 2017, http://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/THE-ART-OF-DODGING-THE-QUESTION

24 To remind the reader, 1920 Treaty of Sèvres was signed between the victorious Allied Powers of the First World War and the defeated Ottoman Empire. The Treaty was designed to partition Ottoman Empire's territories and confine Turks to a relatively small piece of land in Central Anatolia where they would be open to interventions and attacks by surrounding powers. The Treaty was never ratified, and became null and void with the signing of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne.

25 Tulun, "The Art Of Dodging The Question."

26 Tulun, "The Art Of Dodging The Question."

27 "Charter of the United Nations Chapter I, Article 2" (United Nations, n.d.), http://www.United Nations.org/en/ sections/United Nations-charter/html

Eastern Anatolia has been under the sovereignty of Turks one way or another from the year 1071 onwards. The population of Turkish citizens currently living in those lands is approximately 14.5 million, which is five times more than the total population of Armenia.[28]

Upon examining history of Armenians in the area, it can be observed that Armenians never had any kind of sovereignty over Eastern Anatolia, except for an Armenian kingdom under the reign of Tigranes II (95–55 BC). During various periods, Armenians were under the rule of Arabs, Persians, and Byzantines.[29] Until the Seljuks defeated the Byzantines and gained control of Anatolia, Armenians had been living in principalities as the vassals of the Byzantine Empire.[30] But they were not content with the rule of the Byzantines. When the Byzantine Emperor Justinian tried to persuade the Armenians to accept Byzantine rule instead of Arabs, Armenians replied him that:

> "During the period in which we have acknowledged Byzantine rule we have received, in times difficulty and hardship, nothing but the most ludicrous forms of assistance. Our allegiance has consistently been rewarded by insults. To swear allegiance to you means abandoning ourselves to ruin and destitution. Allow us to remain under the rule of our present masters, who well know how to exercise their authority over us."[31]

Armenians dissatisfaction of the Byzantine policy towards Armenians was also emphasized by other writers. Christopher J. Walker evaluates the early eleventh century Byzantine policy towards Armenians as expansionist and annexationist.[32]

Once the Turks started to rule over these lands, Armenians then became dependent on the Seljuks, who were praised by the Armenian writers of the time.[33] Armenian historian Mateos of Urfa's following words in reference to Seljuk ruler Melik Shah demonstrates the views Armenians held towards their rulers:

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28 The population of Armenia is 2,986,100 (as of January 1, 2017).

29 Esat Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question* (İstanbul: Alas Ofset, 1988), 289–90.

30 Kamuran Gürün, *The Armenian File, The Myth of Innocence Exposed* (London, Nicosia and İstanbul: K. Rustem & Bro. and Weidenfeld & Nicholson Ltd, 1985), 9–17.

31 Uras, *The Armenians in History and the Armenian Question*, 290.

32 J. Christopher Walker, *Armenia, The Survival of a Nation* (New York: St. Martin's Press Inc., 1980), 30.

33 Mateos of Urfa, *Vekayiname (952-1136) and Father Grigor's Zeyli (1131-1162)*, trans. Hrant D. Andreasyan (Ankara, 1987), 171.

> "The (Turkish) Sultan's heart was filled with compassion for Christians. He gazed upon the people of the countries he passed through with the affection of a father. Thus, he gained dominance over many states and cities without any battle."[34]

After the establishment of the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians became an integral part of the state. During the rise of the Ottoman Empire, Armenians became loyal subjects of the state and a great number of Armenians were chosen to serve in high governmental posts. In the Ottoman government, there were a total 22 Armenian ministers, 33 members of parliament, 29 generals, 7 ambassadors, 11 consul generals, 11 academicians, and 41 senior government officers.[35] 10 Armenians served as members of parliament in the first parliament and 11 served in the second one.[36]

However, during the downfall period, driven by provocations of the Great Powers, Armenian nationalists began to formulate ideas relating to an independent Armenia on territory that they could grab from the fragments of a disintegrated Ottoman Empire.[37] They almost succeeded with the declaration of the short-lived First Republic of Armenia over a small territory with the support of Britain in 1918.[38] The republic lasted for over two years and was eventually annexed by the Soviet Union in 1922. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the republic regained its independence in 1991. Since the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the issue of territorial claims against Turkey has become an issue again. The contested landmass from Turkey is significant. It includes vast historical Turkish territories such as the regions of Kars-Ardahan including Ağrı Mountain (Mount Ararat) and the surrounding cities like Van, Bitlis, and Erzurum together with the port city of Trabzon in order to gain access to the Black Sea coast on the north.

In this regard, both the government of the Republic of Armenia and the ARF consider the Republic of Turkey as if it is an occupying a sovereign part of Armenian territory and they view the Turkish Armed Forces as an occupying force. These statements bare similarity with these of the terrorist organization

34 Mateos of Urfa, *Vekayiname (952-1136) and Father Grigor's Zeyli (1131-1162).*

35 Salih Yılmaz, "Statements against Turks and supposed Armenian genocide in a10th grade history school book taught in the Armenian Republic", *Research on the Turkish World*, Number: 177, December 2008, 112

36 "Aide–Mémorie on the Rights of Minorities in Turkey" (National Association for The Ottoman Society of Nations, 1922), 31.

37 *Historical Facts in Turkish-Armenian Relations* (İstanbul: Talaat Pasha Committee Publication-2, 2015), 30.

38 Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Republic of Armenia,* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1971), 271.

PKK[39] and the two separatist Kurdish parties, in Turkey HDP[40] and its predecessor BDP,[41] and which mentioned their support for the Armenian Diaspora in their proclamation statements. The first official meeting between BDP and ARF took place during the Washington Kurdish Conference on October 28-29, 2013. The conference, the first ever organized in Washington by the U.S. office of the BDP, the leading pro-Kurdish political party in Turkey at that time, was held in the National Press Club. An Armenian delegation headed by ARF Bureau member Hagop Der Khatchadourian attended the conference and also held consultations regarding prospects for increased cooperation with several political leaders and other key Kurdish stakeholders.

In the opening speech, Der Khatchadourian stated that:

> "We welcome this inaugural BDP conference in Washington, D.C., and the opportunity it afforded for meaningful dialogue about Armenian Kurdish cooperation, Western Armenia[42], and Kurdistan, and, more broadly, the realization of the national and democratic aspirations of the Armenian and Kurdish nations."[43]

10 days later after the first meeting, a high-level meeting between delegations representing the ARF and the BDP was held in Istanbul on November 12. This was the first time since 1923 that an official ARF delegation visited Istanbul. As BDP and ARF announced the Istanbul meeting was part of an ongoing dialogue about the possibilities of Armenian-Kurdish cooperation, "Western Armenia" and "Kurdistan", as well as the national and democratic aspirations of the Armenian and Kurdish nations.[44]

On November 30, 2013, an AYF (Armenian Youth Federation - Dashnaktsutyun Youth Organization) delegation participated in the first youth congress of BDP. The congress was organized by the Youth Assembly of the BDP and was held in Diyarbakir. The AYF representatives addressed the attendees outlining their views on a number of regional and international issues faced by both the Armenian and Kurdish people. The speech, which was delivered first in Armenian and then in Turkish, focused on the shared history

39 PKK: Partiya Kerkera Kurdistan (Kurdistan Workers Party)

40 HDP: Halkların Demokratik Partisi (Peoples' Democratic Party)

41 BDP (Peace and Democracy Party) changed her name to DBP (Democratic Regions Party) in 2014

42 As it was mentioned in the introduction of this work Armenia and Armenian Diaspora quotes 19 provinces of Turkey as Western Armenia and regards this territory as Armenian soil.

43 "ARF Attends Washington Kurdish Conference," *The Armenian Weekly*, October 29, 2013.

44 "BDP, ARF Hold High-Level Meeting in Istanbul," *The Armenian Weekly*, November 12, 2013

and the cooperation of the two peoples.[45] Both sides emphasized the importance of mutual cooperation between ARF and BDP.

On the other hand, BDP declared that it would establish a platform in their party with the aim of accepting the Armenian genocide claims, and apologizing for the role played by the Kurdish population during the horrific events of World War One (1914-1918).[46]

As for the PKK, BDP and ARF cooperation, CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) of the United States released the secret documents related to the cooperation between ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) and the PKK in 2016.[47] Sean Patrick Smyth states that:

> "From the mid-1970s onwards PKK, ASALA and the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide desire to bring attention to the claims that the Ottoman Empire committed genocide against its Armenian population in 1915. According to the published notes of a joint press conference conducted by ASALA and the PKK in 1980, the two organizations had reached an agreement on issues including the foundation of a federal state and had also agreed to conduct joint armed actions against Turkey".[48]

• Nagorno-Karabakh and Nakhichevan

ARTICLE No: 4 - "Complete and unequivocal restoration of territorial property rights of the Armenian Nation shall include recognition of the independence and international sovereignty of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh, Nakhichevan and their current borders.

The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan shall immediately remove any and all blockades of Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabakh) and allow unrestricted access through their borders."[49]

45 "AYF Participates in First BDP Youth Congress in Diyarbakir," *The Armenian Weekly*, December 2, 2013

46 "Demokrasi ve Barış Konferansı Sonuç Bildirgesi" (Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi, May 27, 2013), https://bdpblog. wordpress.com/20130527/demokrasi-ve-baris-konferansi-sonuc-bildirgesi#more-2791

47 Hazel Çağan Elbir, "CIA, ASALA ve PKK İşbirliği Belgelerinin Gizliliğini Kaldırdı," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Yorum No: 2017 / 16, February 14, 2017, http://avim.org.tr/tr/Yorum/CIA-ASALA-VE-PKK-ISBIRLIGI-BELGELERININ-GIZLILIGINI-KALDIRDI-1

48 Sean Patrick Smyth, "Relations Between the PKK and ASALA," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Commentary No: 2017 / 42, May 29, 2017, http://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/RELATIONS-BETWEEN-THE-PKK-AND-ASALA

49 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide."

The history of the Karabakh region is rooted in antiquity. It is one of the historic provinces of Azerbaijan. Karabakh has never been a part of the Armenian state until Armenian forces captured it by force in 1992.[50]

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict started parallel to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The active phase of the conflict began in February of 1988 when the separatist powers of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Region of Azerbaijan Republic, incited by the Republic of Armenia, started to gather for mass public meetings, cause riots and other acts of civil disturbance and disobedience promoting the idea of breaking off from Azerbaijan and joining with Armenia.[51]

Armenians' accusation of Azerbaijan for discriminating against the Christians that they used to solidify their claims have little basis in reality. The foremost reason was that the Armenians harbored desires to expand their tiny state at the expense of their neighbors.[52] This process was completed when the Armenian administration within Karabakh declared their own state after the Azeri population had been expelled. This state, called the Republic of Nagorno-Karabakh, is not recognized by the international community, including Republic of Armenia itself. [53]

As it currently stands, Nagorno-Karabakh fully controls five of the territories which surround it, including Kelbajar, Lachin, Kubatly, Jebrail and Zengelan, and has partial control of two other territories, Aghdam and Fizuli. This means that, all together, Armenia has occupied a great part of Azerbaijan's territory since the war period of 1993 and 1994.[54] These territories were stripped of its entire Azerbaijani population and other nationalities that lived there and resulted in tens of thousands of deaths and hundreds of thousands wounded.[55]

Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the Republic of Armenia upon its establishment in 1991 after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. However, the policy pursued by the Republic of Armenia in an effort to annex the Nagorno-Karabakh region demonstrated the willingness of independent Armenia to subject neighboring country of Azerbaijan's civilians to massacres and to exile them from their homes in their

50 Samuel Weems, *Secrets of a "Christian" Terrorist State Armenia* (St. John Press, Dallas, 2002), 362.

51 Namig H. Aliyev, *International Law Issues in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict* (Tbilisi: Publishing House "Universal," 2009), 13.

52 Weems, *Secrets of a "Christian" Terrorist State Armenia*, 364.

53 Weems, *Secrets of a "Christian" Terrorist State Armenia*, 364.

54 "Nagorno Karabakh: Understanding Conflict, Conflict Management Program Student Field Trip to the Region," (Johns Hopkins University School for Advanced International Studies, 2013), 173–74.

55 Aliyev, *International Low Issues in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, 17.

effort to grab more land.[56] Within a few months, the conflict flared up into a full-size war, even involving Armenian regular troops and whole detachments of the former Soviet military on the side of the Karabakh Armenians.[57] Consequently, Azerbaijan, within less than two years of fighting, lost the entire territory of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast but also many of its neighboring and surrounding areas, which previously had a homogeneously Azeri population. In total, over 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan remains under occupation. Over a million Azeris have been forced to leave their homes in Armenia, Karabakh or its surrounding areas since the beginning of the conflict in 1988.[58] In an effort to stop the unprovoked attacks, the Republic of Turkey decided to close its borders with the Republic of Armenia as a result of that war.[59] Since that period, the Republic of Armenia has been illegally occupying one fifth of the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan, in spite of the United Nations Resolutions demanding Armenia to withdraw to the borders recognized by the international community.[60]

Turkey was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the Republic of Armenia upon its establishment in 1991 after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. However, the policy pursued by the Republic of Armenia in an effort to annex the Nagorno-Karabakh region demonstrated the willingness of independent Armenia to subject neighboring country of Azerbaijan's civilians to massacres and to exile them from their homes in their effort to grab more land.

Without mentioning that the Republic of Armenia invaded the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan together with seven (five fully, two partially) other regions of Azerbaijan against international legal norms, ARF is attempting to portray as if the Republic of Turkey's closing of its border with Armenia was an act of aiding and abetting the Republic of Azerbaijan, as a co-conspirator and accomplice in an aggressive campaign against the Republic of Armenia.[61] The reality was

56 Weems, *Secrets of a "Christian" Terrorist State Armenia*, 364.

57 Svante E. Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh: A Delicate Balance," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 1 (January 1998): 54.

58 Cornell, "Turkey and the Conflict in Nagorno Karabakh…," 51.

59 "Nagorno Karabakh: Understanding Conflict, Conflict Management Program Student Field Trip to the Region," 140.

60 "Security Council Resolutions" (United Nations, November 12, 1993), 884; "Security Council Resolutions" (United Nations, July 29, 1993), 853; "Security Council Resolutions" (United Nations, October 14, 1993), 874; ibid.; "Security Council Resolutions" (United Nations, April 30, 1993), 822; "General Assembly Resolution" (United Nations, March 14, 2008), 62/243.

61 Dr. Sabir Shahtakhty, *Chimerical "Great Armenia": Facts and Evidences* (İstanbul: Araz Yayınları, 2016), 37.

that the aggressive side was the Republic of Armenia, and the Republics of Turkey and Azerbaijan had simply responded to this aggression.

The Republic of Armenia and the Armenians of Karabakh continue to this day to defy the United Nations' calls for their withdrawal from the seven regions of Azerbaijan, which contain six cities, 12 towns, and 830 settlements. During Armenian occupations, as alluded to earlier, 1 million Azeri people were deported from their land, 20,000 were killed, more than 20,000 were wounded, 50,000 were disabled, and 5,101 remain missing.[62]

During 1992-1993 the UN Security Council adopted four resolutions (822, 853, 874 and 884) and made six statements of the UNSC President on the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. Each of the abovementioned resolutions and statements confirms the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, condemns the occupation of the Nagorno-Karabakh region and adjacent territories, demands the immediate cease-fire, suspension of hostilities, and withdrawal of all occupying forces from the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Similarly, the demands of other international organizations have fallen on deaf ears. The Nagorno-Karabakh issue was elaborated upon in Resolution 1416 (2005) of OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) which states that the conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region dealt with by the OSCE Minsk Conference by the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on 25 January 2005 have acknowledged the occupation of Azerbaijani territories by the Armenian armed forces and which stressed that the "occupation of foreign territory by a member state constitutes a grave violation of that state's obligations as a member of the Council of Europe."[63] However, none of these resolutions were taken into consideration by Armenia, and Azerbaijani territories remain under occupation. As such, article 4 of the Montebello Statement is revealed to be baseless when examining both historical events and international law and the stance of the international community.

• Restitution and Economic Assistance to the Republic of Armenia

Article 11: "The Republic of Turkey must make financial restitution to the descendants of the victims of the Armenian Genocide or their designated community or organizational representatives and provide

62 Elshan İzzatov, "Tarihten Günümüze Azeri-Ermeni İlişkilerinde Karabağ Sorunu" (Master, Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2006), 76.

63 Aliyev, *International Low Issues in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, 35.

economic assistance to the Republic of Armenia in amounts and manners to be determined by a duly appointed international tribunal assembled for this purpose."[64]

When we look at the case history of the matter of reparations, it can be observed that a number of Armenians and Greeks who were former subjects of the Ottoman Empire (or people who are their descendants) and some American companies that had economic interests across the Ottoman territory demanded compensation from the Republic of Turkey for their pecuniary losses during the years 1914-1922.

The issue was also frequently brought to the agenda during the Lausanne Conference of 1922-23. The United States concluded a separate treaty with Turkey during the Lausanne Conference. Within this framework, it initiated talks with Turkey concerning the compensation of the abandoned properties of their own citizens. After signing the Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey and the US agreed for talks on the issue of compensation.

Two committees were established in order to investigate such demands. The US committee was represented by G. Howland Shaw and Edgar W. Turlington under the chair of Rear Admiral Mark Bristol and Turkish committee by Dr. Adnan Adıvar with two other representatives namely Münir (Ertegün) and Ibrahim Bey. At the end of the talks, the two sides agreed on the establishment of a commission to address the issue of compensation. With the exchange of notes on December 24, 1923, this agreement came into force. In this note, it is stated that 6 months after the mutual exchange of documents with regard to the ratification of the Turkish-American Treaty of Lausanne by the parliaments, a commission would convene in Istanbul consisting of two American and two Turkish members. This commission was to examine the files concerning the claims and to reach a conclusion within six months.

Upon the rejection of the Turkish-American Treaty of Lausanne in the US Congress, the signatory parties agreed that the talks concerning the claims would not be suspended. Within the framework of a "modus vivendi" regarding the establishment of diplomatic relations between Turkey and the United States on February 17, 1927, it was agreed that the exchange of notes in Istanbul in relation to the claims would be implemented and a commission would be established. According to the reconciliation reached, if the Treaty of Lausanne in the US Congress would not be ratified until June 1, 1928 the Commission would gather six months after the exchange of ratification of a commercial

64 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide."

convention and a convention of establishment and residence. Finally, six months after the agreements were implemented on February 15, 1933, the Commission convened on August 15, 1933 in Istanbul. This time, the Turkish members of the commission were Fevki Bey and Esat Bey, while the American members were G. Howland and Julian E. Gillespie.[65]

Treaty of Lausanne in the US Congress would not be ratified until June 1, 1928. The Commission would gather six months after the exchange of ratification of a commercial convention and a convention of establishment and residence. Finally, six months after the agreements were implemented on February 15, 1933, the Commission convened on 15 August 1933 in Istanbul. This time, the Turkish members of the commission were Fevki Bey and Esat Bey, while the American members were G. Howland and Julian E. Gillespie.[66]

This US committee announced in the newspapers that those claiming compensation from the Republic of Turkey for their pecuniary losses that may have occurred between the years 1914-1922 should inform the committee. In this context, 1880 files were examined initially. Afterwards, 750 new files were also added to the list of claims examined.[67]

Investigation of these committees revealed that most of the documents in the files presented were forgeries and a large number of cases (approximately 600) were found to be legally groundless by the American commission after a cursory examination. The US committee assessed that the necessary compensation to be paid totaled 55 million dollars on April 4, 1933. However, the committee reduced the figure to 5 million dollars soon after. Turkey notified that it could pay 500,000 dollars.[68]

In September 1934, Turkish and US commissions agreed that the fair amount of payment would be 1,300,000 dollars as compensation in installments and payment of the first installment would be made on June 1, 1936. But after Turkey paid the 9th installment, the USA declared that no more payment was necessary because no more indemnity was left.[69]

75 years after the compensation procedure was completed, some Armenian-Americans started to file lawsuits against the Republic of Turkey, seeking

65 Kemal Çiçek, "The 1934-1935 Turkish-American Compensation Agreement and Its Implications for Today," *Review of Armenian Studies,* Issue 23 (2011): 94–100.

66 Çiçek, "The 1934-1935 Turkish-American Compensation…," 100.

67 Çiçek, "The 1934-1935 Turkish-American Compensation…," 100.

68 Çiçek, "The 1934-1935 Turkish-American Compensation…," 108.

69 Çiçek, "The 1934-1935 Turkish-American Compensation…," 118.

compensation. These lawsuits also targeted the Central Bank of Turkey and the Ziraat Bank as financial instruments of the Turkish government.[70] These lawsuit procedures are in progress. If you look in these lawsuits carefully it can be easily observed that main object of these lawsuits is not only compensation but also bring the genocide claims as a part of the USA domestic law.[71]

• Designation of April 24 as a Day of Remembrance

Article 15: "The Republic of Turkey shall adopt as a part of its national educational system a full and complete acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide. The Republic of Turkey shall designate April 24 of each year as a Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Armenian Genocide and shall permit and encourage unrestricted commemorative events within its current and future borders, starting with April 24, 2015, the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide."[72]

By means of these demands, ARF seeks to compel the Republic of Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian claims without also giving space to the nuanced nature of the claims, and the corresponding Turkish civilian losses. ARF seeks to influence younger generations in Turkey, in cooperation with civil society organizations, publishing houses, and separatist organizations, to bring the issue of the Armenian genocide claims to public attention in pursuit of their political objectives. The ARF and their political allies within Turkey also aim to create feelings of guilt among the new Turkish generation so that they can blame their ancestors with a crime that they did not commit.

The date ARF symbolically chose, April 24, to commemorate what they term the "Armenian Genocide" is the date on which prominent leaders of the Armenian revolutionary organizations were taken under custody in Istanbul and other major cities.[73]

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70 "Armenian-Americans File Multi-Billion Dollar Lawsuit Against Turkey," *Huffington Post*, August 4, 2010, http://www. huffingtonpost.com/harut-sassounian/armenian-americans.

71 Aslan Yavuz Şir, "Amerika Birleşik Devletleri Mahkemelerinde Açılan Tazminat Davaları Üzerine," *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, Yorum No: 2011 / 27, September 26, 2011, http://avim.org.tr/tr/Yorum/AMERIKA-BIRLESIK-DEVLETLERI-MAHKEMELERINDE-ACILAN-TAZMINAT-DAVALARI-UZERINE

72 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide."

73 Kemal Çiçek, *Ermenilerin Zorunlu Göçü 1915-1917*, vol. 110, XVI (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2005), 34.

Before the decision to arrest the leaders of Armenian revolutionary organizations, a significant number of persons, including Armenian member of parliaments, left the Ottoman Empire to join the voluntary troops formed by the Armenians in Russian territories. According to an Ottoman official document, "Armenian committees have been working to accomplish autonomy for the Armenians by means of political and revolutionary societies," and this goal led them to cooperate with the Allied Powers, primarily the Russians, against the Ottoman government.[74]

Cooperation between Allied Forces and Armenian Revolutionary Committees

It is recorded in official Ottoman publications even before the Ottomans entered the war that the British, French and even Italian consuls in addition to the Russians were helping the revolutionary Armenian committees to communicate with the outside world and were assisting them with money, arms, and other ways.[75]

The Armenian writer M. Varantyan in his work *The History of the Dashnak Party* explains the political program of the Armenian committees as follows, "the aim of the organization is to incite rebellion and as a consequence of this rebellion to gain independence or freedom as in Bulgaria and Lebanon." Similarly, the slogan of the committees was, "kill the Turks and Kurds wherever you find them. Kill reactionaries, those who aren't true to their word, Armenian collaborators and attain your revenge."[76]

The commander-in-chief of the Ottoman army reported that the Dashnaks at the Erzurum congress had adopted the following plans:

1. To preserve loyalty in tranquility pending the declaration of war, but to carry on with the preparations for arming with weapons being brought from Russia and others to be obtained locally.

2. (Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman Army) To join the Russian army with their arms if war is declared.

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74 Yusuf Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915, The Circular of April 24, 1915, And the Arrest of Armenian Committee Members in Istanbul," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 14, no. 1&2 (2008): 75.

75 Mim Kemal Öke, *The Armenian Question 1914-1923* (Nicosia: K. Rustem &Brother, 1988), 70.

76 *Süslü, Azmi, Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, vol. 5 (Ankara: Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayın, 1990), 55.

3. To remain calm if the Ottoman army advances.

4. To form armed bands and begin programmed operations behind army lines should the Ottoman army then retreat or come to a standstill position.[77]

Similar reports and the discovery of a number of bombs and weapons by security searches in several provinces convinced the government that the Armenian organizations were in preparation for an all-out rebellion.[78] An instruction of the Ottoman Supreme Military Command, delivered on February 27, 1915, cited the capture of these weapons as well as bombs and ciphered documents ordering that Armenian soldiers in the army be kept away from armed duties but also adding that loyal Armenians would not be harmed.[79]

In this context, 226 Armenian committee leaders were arrested. Those arrested in Istanbul were not ordinary Armenians, but were committee members. Of the 19 Mauser guns, 74 Martini rifles, 111 Winchester guns, 96 mannlicher, 78 gıra, 358 filovir, 3,591 pistols, and also 45,221 pistol bullets found by police searches conducted in Istanbul under the April 24 circular, all were delivered to the Maçka Military Warehouse in case the army needed them.

Circular on April 24, 1915

Since these measures did not produce the consequences desired, the government decided to close down the committees that had armed and incited the Armenians and to arrest their leaders. For this purpose, on April 24, 1915, the Ministry of Interior sent a circular to fourteen vilayets (provinces) and 10 mutasarrıflıks (counties). This circular ordered closing of the Armenian committees, namely, Hınchak, Dashnak and the like, seizure of their documents; arrest of the chiefs of the committees and the Armenians notorious for dissident activities; and gathering in more appropriate places those whose existence in their present places was regarded as dangerous. In this context, 226 Armenian committee leaders were arrested. Those arrested in Istanbul were not ordinary Armenians, but were committee members. Of the 19 Mauser guns, 74 Martini rifles, 111 Winchester guns, 96 mannlicher,

77 Guenter Lewy, *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey, A Disputed Genocside* (Salt Lake City: University of Utan Press, 2005), 44.

78 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 73; "Dâhiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," n.d., 2/67-A; BOA., DH. EUM.

79 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 76; "Document No. 1999," *Askeri Tarih Belgeleri Dergisi*, no. 85 (December 1985): 23–24.

78 gıra, 358 filovir, 3,591 pistols, and also 45,221 pistol bullets found by police searches conducted in Istanbul under the April 24 circular, all were delivered to the Maçka Military Warehouse in case the army needed them.[80]

The Ministry of Interior sent a message to the Governorship of Ankara Province on April 25, 1915, stating that about 180 Armenian committee leaders whose stay in Istanbul was considered dangerous would be consigned to Ankara by train that day. Some 60-70 of these Armenians would be imprisoned in the Ayaş military warehouse, and about 100 of the rest would be sent to Çankırı.[81]

Those who sent to Çankırı were not put in prison. They were allowed to wander about the town freely, they were scattered into houses in groups of three to five men, and some were resided in the summerhouses about half an hour's walk from town. The only thing they were obligated to was to show up at the police station every twenty-four hours.[82] The needy among the exiles were provided with daily payments from the funds allocated by the Ministry of Interior.[83]

Either the Armenians subjected to compulsory residence themselves or their relatives petitioned to the Ottoman government claiming their innocence and asking for their release. After careful examination of these petitions, the Ottoman central government set free those found innocent, foreign nationals and the ill.[84] For instance, upon the order of the Ministry of Interior, Vahram Torkumyan, Agop Nargileciyan, Karabet Keropoyan, Zare Bardizbanyan, Pozant Keciyan, Pervant Tolayan, Rafael Karagezyan and Vartabet Gomidas were released and were granted permission to return to Istanbul. Vartabet Gomidas was in the first group set free, after having stayed in Çankırı for

80 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 76-78; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 16/48.

81 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 7/52.

82 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," n.d.

83 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 6/29.

84 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 6/10; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 7/22; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 7/56; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 7/36; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 8/82; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 9/122; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 9/23; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 9/46; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 9/47; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 10/4; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2.Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 9/79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 9/60.

thirteen days. When he became ill in Istanbul and applied to the Ministry of Interior on August 30, 1917, to travel to Vienna for treatment, he was duly granted permission and went to Vienna in September 1917.[85]

Diran Dilakyan was released on condition that he would live with his family somewhere outside of Istanbul.[86] On May 29, Hayik Hocasaryan,[87] and on June 27, Agop Begleryan and Vartanes Papasyan were set free. By the order of the Ministry of Interior, Serkis Cevahiryan, Kirkor Celalyan, Bagban Bardiz and fourteen other prisoners returned to Istanbul On July 18, three prisoners and Apik Canbaz were granted permission to return to Istanbul on August 10.

Vahan Altunyan and Ohannes Terlemezyan, exiled to Kayseri from Çankırı, were also released and allowed to return to Istanbul.[88] A Bulgarian subject, Bedros Manukyan; an Iranian subject, Migirdic Istepniyan; and a Russian subject, Leon Krigorkyan, were set free to be expelled from Ottoman lands.[89]

Serkis Sahinyan, Ohannes Hanisyan, Artin Bogasyan and Zara Mumcuyan were among those pardoned on condition that they leave Istanbul for good.[90] A member of Dashnak committee, Serkis Kılınçyan, having been pardoned and given permission to go to Eskişehir, first escaped to Istanbul. Then with the help of the German firm Grupi he fled to Bulgaria, where he continued carrying out his activities.[91] Some of the Armenians in Çankırı were sent to prison in Ayaş.[92] Others were exiled to places such as Ankara, Izmit, Bursa, Eskişehir, and Kütahya, and the rest were dispatched to the relocation center of Zor.

85 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…,"; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 42/69.

86 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 52/266.

87 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 79; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 53/49.

88 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 80; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi" (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 56/60.

89 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 80; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 54-A/177.; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 57/57.

90 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 80; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 57/57.

91 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 80; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 57/23.

92 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 80; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 57/273.

The total number of Armenians subjected to compulsory residence in Çankırı between April 24 and August 31, 1915, was 155. Of these, 35 were found to be innocent and allowed to return to Istanbul. Twenty-five were found guilty and imprisoned in Ankara or Ayaş, and 57 were exiled to the Zor region. Of the 7 foreign nationals, 3 were exiled from the country and the rest were detained in custody. The remaining 31 Armenians were pardoned and of these, 13 were consigned to Izmit, 10 to Eskişehir, 2 to Kütahya, 2 to Bursa, 2 to Kastamonu, 1 to Geyve and 1 to Kayseri.[93]

As for the Armenians imprisoned in Ayaş most of them were arrested in Istanbul as committee members of the ARF and sent to the Ayaş military warehouse. Some of them were sent to the other cities, Hamparsum Boyaciyan to Kayseri, Marzaros Gazaryan to Develi, A. Dagavaryan to Diyarbakir for court martial,[94] Hacik Bogusyan to Ankara for trial, Hirant Agacanyan to Istanbul,[95] Teodor Manzikyan and Akrik Keresteciyan to Zor, and Sahbaz Parsih to Elazığ to be imprisoned there.[96] Leon Sirinyan, a U.S. citizen, was deported.[97] Viram Sabuh Samuelof and Rotsum Rostusyon were first released but later prosecuted.[98] Akrik Keresteciyan was sent to Zor but also soon released.[99]

The Armenians dispatched to Ayas apparently were kept under arrest throughout World War One because they were members of the executive board of the Hinchak and Dashnak parties. Dikran, son of Serkis Bagdikyan, a Dashnak member, died on March 9, 1918, in Ayaş.

The petition submitted by Andon Panosyan, a Dashnak propagandist, on April 8, 1918, asking for pardon and his return to Istanbul, was not accepted.[100] Only after the signing of the Mudros Armistice did Katnik Madukyan, Kirkor

93 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 80; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 10/73.

94 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 57/214.

95 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 54 N 63.

96 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 54/5.

97 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 6/47.

98 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 11/12.

99 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 54 A/366.

100 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 50/10.

Hamparsumyan, Pantuvan Parzisyan receive the chance to be discharged on November 10, 1918. The rest were freed after the Allied Powers took control of the Ottoman Empire following the armistice.[101]

This detailed information proves that the April 24, 1915 is not a date during which Armenians were killed by the Ottomans and cannot be considered as the starting date of a genocide.

As for the other parts of the country, the Armenian committees formed gangs in areas where they instigated riots including Zeytun,[102] Kayseri-Everek-Develi,[103] Trabzon-Giresuni,[104] Ankara,[105] İzmit-Adapazarı,[106] Bursa,[107] Adana,[108] Halep,[109] İzmir,[110] and Samsun.[111]

On March 25, 1915, it was reported by the Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that Armenians in Tekirdağ, especially their last attack on Boğaz, were storing guns and ammunitions in the Armenian Church in accordance with the plan they have agreed upon previously to incite an upheaval against the local administration.[112]

On March 27, 1915, it was reported by the 10th Army Corps to the office of the Chief of Staff that the Dashnak Committee had set up a revolutionary group in the province of Sivas and waiting for the most delicate times for insurrection.[113]

In Kayseri, it has been reported by the 15th Division Command that upon the death of an Armenian who had been making bombs in Develi, search was conducted by the Ottoman administrators and other officials, weapons and gunpowder have been unearthed in the Armenian cemeteries. After detailed

101 Sarınay, "What Happened on April 24, 1915…," 81; "Dahiliye Nezareti Emniyet-i Umumi 2. Şube," (Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, n.d.), 93/210.

102 *Arşiv Belgeleriyle Ermeni Faaliyetleri (1914-1918)*, vol. 1 (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE Yayınları, 2005).

103 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918" (Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etütler Başkanlığı, 2005), 1.

104 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918."

105 *Ermeni Komitelerinin Amaçları* (Ankara: Genelkurmay ATASE Yayınları, 2003).

106 "Genelkurmay ATASE Arşivi."

107 *Ermeni Komitelerinin Amaçları*, 193.

108 *Süslü, Azmi, Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, 5:90.

109 *Ermeni Komitelerinin Amaçları*, 194.

110 Halaçoğlu et al., *Ermeniler: Sürgün ve Göç*, 131.

111 *Ermeni Komitelerinin Amaçları*, 195.

112 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918," 77.

113 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918," 79.

investigations, 21 bombs have been found in the courtyard of an Armenian Church and in an Armenian school in Develi on March 28, 1915.[114]

On April 8, 1915, it was reported from Hasankale to the Ottoman Army's General Headquarter that Turkish troops had seized of 52 guns in Pulur and that Armenians were preparing for a riot in the region. The Armenians in the Puruk village of Suşehri had likewise attacked a civilian convoy passing by on February 25, 1915. Some Armenian bandits opened fire on the Turkish forces. Searches carried out in and around Armenian villages and 139 guns were seized. [115]

All these preparations obliged the Ottoman army for precautions to relocate those Armenians living in sensitive security zones. Especially in the Eastern Anatolia, sections of the Armenian populace made many attempts to hamper the Ottoman Army. Many Armenians conscripted to the Ottoman Army fled with their weapons and joined the ranks of the enemy, while Armenian civilians and even their religious leaders spied on behalf of the enemy armies.[116] It was even reported that Armenian bakers had poisoned Ottoman troops with the bread they had baked.[117]

However, not all Armenians in Anatolia were subjected to relocation and those that were compelled to migrate were later allowed to return back to Anatolia.

Upon the continuance of subversive activity in spite of the decision to arrest the committee leaders, the Ottoman government made a decision on May 27, 1915 to remove Armenians from the areas they were in rebellion and to transport them to places (like Damascus and Mosul), which were provinces within the borders of the Ottoman Empire.[118]

However, not all Armenians in Anatolia were subjected to relocation and those that were compelled to migrate were later allowed to return back to Anatolia.[119] The Armenian Patriarch himself made the following statement in regard to this issue;

> "Istanbul Armenians and Armenians from the Kütahya and Aydın provinces were not forced to migrate. Armenians from Izmit and Bursa,

114 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918," 54.

115 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918," 124-125.

116 "Armenian Activities in the Archive Documents 1914-1918," 57-59.

117 *Ermeni Komitelerinin Amaçları*, 7, 141-142, 146-149, 152, 155-157, 162-166, 191, 193-194, 201.

118 *Süslü, Azmi, Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, 5:111.

119 BOA. Bab-ı Âli Evrak Odası, ŞFR. No:341055.

> Kastamonu, Ankara, and Konya provinces were forced to migrate but have currently returned back. There are many Armenians in Kayseri and Sivas, Harput, Diyarbakir and especially in Kilikya and Istanbul who have returned but cannot make their way back to their villages. The remainder of all Erzurum and Bitlis Armenians are in Kilikya."[120]

In addition to the provinces mentioned above, rebellious Armenians in the eastern provinces of Kars and Van were also not a part of the forced migration as these regions were under Russian occupation, however, both during the occupation and after the withdrawal of the Russian army, Armenians of Kars and Van committed major massacres in these two provinces.[121]

There were additional exceptions. Those who did not breach government orders in the defense of the Ottoman Empire and who did not violate public order, those who were not engaged in espionage for enemy countries, those who were Catholics and Protestants, soldiers, officers, deputies, military doctors, employees in the battalions, railway civil servants, laborers, servants and their families who were employed by Muslim families, and those whose loyalty was not in question were not subjected to forced migration.[122]

Measures Taken to Ensure the Safety of the Displaced Armenians

The Interior Ministry of the Ottoman Government had taken various measures to protect the security of relocated Armenians and to ensure they reached their destination safely. Some of these measures included the following: before the implementation of the forced migration policy, the Ottoman government sent a written order to all provinces, asking them to take all required precautions to meet the needs of the convoys passing through their areas and ordered food to be stocked for them.[123] Housing and Refugee Director Şükrü Bey (Kaya) was assigned in person for identifying and procuring all required necessities as well as allocating funds to the provinces to meet the needs of the convoys during transportation.[124]

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120 *Süslü, Azmi, Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, 5:149–50; Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* 62–63.

121 McCarthy et al., *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*, 245–47.

122 *Süslü, Azmi, Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, 5:149–50; Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* 62–63.

123 Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* 66; Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi: No. 55-291, 55-341, 55-A/17, 55-A/77, 55-A/135, 57/110.

124 Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* 66–67; Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi: No: 55-A/17, 53/305.

Local administrations were responsible for the safety of the Armenians and their goods while they were being transported, the government was held responsible for allocating funds for their sustenance. All movable and non-movable possessions left behind by the relocated Armenians were officially recorded and protected. A government delegation was formed to conduct auctions to sell movable goods that could be damaged. The proceeds were placed in a government trust on behalf of the owner for safekeeping. Specific information about the goods sold, such as the type, quantity, value, details of the purchaser was recorded in a special manuscript and once it was confirmed by the government delegation, records were prepared. The original documents were given to the government and an official copy was given to the "Commission for the Goods Left Behind". The Armenians who returned had received back the ownership of 98% of their movable and immovable properties.[125]

The Ministry of Interior also took measures to ensure that the relocated Armenians reached their destinations safely. The main method of transportation used was trains and river boats. Almost all those who were relocated from Western Anatolia were transported by train to their new location of settlement. Those who left via the city of Cizre were transported by trains and river boats called "shahtur". In regions where there were no trains or river transportation vehicles, the convoys were transported, with animals and carts, to certain centers and put on trains from there.

It has been confirmed by officials of foreign missions that the government, despite the difficult conditions and the lack of resources, transported the Armenians subjected to forced migration to their new settlements in an orderly manner. Edward I. Nathan, the US Consul in Mersin, sent the following report to Ambassador Henry Morgenthau on August 30, 1915;

> "The whole route between Tarsus and Adana is filled with Armenians. From Adana onwards they purchase tickets and travel by train. Despite the misery, suffering caused as a result of the big crowds, the government is handling this situation in an extremely orderly manner; violence and disorder is not allowed. The migrants are provided with enough tickets, and help is provided for those in need."[126]

125 Bülent Bakar, *Ermeni Tehciri* (Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi: Ankara, 2009), 200–212.

126 Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918),* 58; Dahiliye Nezareti, Emniyet Umum Müdürlüğü 2. Şube, No: 2D/13

Edward I. Nathan's report dated September 11, 1915 is as follows;

"Since the time I sent report number 478 (dated 30 August 1915) hundreds of thousands of more Armenians have reached here and are being sent to Aleppo. In the Damascus camp, a hospital was set up for the sick. During my visit 50 patients were being treated there. According to the information I have received nobody has died in the camp, and the government is distributing food to all the exiles."[127]

In their new settlements, Armenians were given homes with title deeds, cultivable land as well as tools to perform their professions and places to store their seeds. Additionally, debts owed to the government or to individuals by those Armenians subjected to forced migration were deferred or completely wiped off as well as prosecution of criminals and suspects were also postponed.[128]

The Genocide Convention in International Law and the Relocation Decision

First of all, after the Second World War, "genocide" was legally defined by the UN Genocide Convention, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948, and then entered into force on January 12, 1951.[129] The Convention does not apply retroactively. The Republic of Turkey did not exist when the relocation of Armenians took place, and additionally, Turkey is only bound with regard to events subsequent the date 12 January 1951.

Moreover, the events of 1915 do not even fit the definition of "genocide" as accepted by the United Nations in 1948.[130] That convention requires *dolus specialis* (special intent) on the side of the aggressor government for the destruction of the people as such (i.e. for belonging to that specific "race", "nation", "ethnicity" or "religion"). In the case of the events of 1915, the Turkish government relocated the Armenians from sensitive security zones where they were aiding and abetting the invading army forces, not because of their religious background or ethnicity.

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127 Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918)*, 58; US Archives NARA 867.4016/193, Copy No: 484.

128 Dahiliye Nezareti Şifre Kalemi: No. 54-A/226; Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler (1914-1918*, 67-68.

129 Michael M. Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide* (New York: Palgrave & Macmillan, 2011), 28.

130 "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Article 2" (United Nations, 1948), http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genocide.htm.

Furthermore, national and international court decisions further weaken the basis of the calls for the 1915 Armenian relocation to be considered as genocide.

1. The decision of the United Kingdom: During the occupation of Istanbul after World War One, the armed forces of the United Kingdom arrested several prominent figures including leaders of the wartime Ottoman government and exiled them to Malta. An international court was established under the direction of a British judge with the purpose of trying these persons in relation to the Armenian issue. After an inconclusive two-year search of the Ottoman, English, American, Egyptian, and Iraqi state archives, the charges were dropped on July 29, 1921 given a lack of evidence.[131] This decision is important because it was taken at a time when the Ottoman Empire had been defeated. That is to say, during a period when the events, witnesses, and archival documents were in the open and the relevant foreign powers had access to them.

2. The Decision of the European Court of Justice: An Armenian association based in France opened a court case on the basis that as the "European Parliament had reached a decision that Turkey committed genocide, Turkey's admission to the European Union must be suspended." In its December 17, 2003 decision, the European Court of Justice (part of the Court of Justice of the European Union - CJEU) noted that the European Parliament's 1987 resolution regarding the "Armenian Genocide" was a political statement and had no basis in law.[132] This decision was appealed by the applicant of the case on 16 January 2004, however, the Fourth Chamber of the Court rejected this appeal, and the decision of the Court became finalized on 29 October 2004 (Case: C-18/04 P).

3. Decision of the International Court of Justice (ICJ): In relation to a court case which Croatia instigated against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 (Serbia became a party to the court case as deemed by ICJ), in its decision dated February 3, 2015, the ICJ dismissed by the genocide claims of both Croatia and Serbia.[133] The Court stated that both parties failed to demonstrate

131 Uluç Gürkan, *Malta Yargılaması, Özgün İngiliz Belgeleriyle* (İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014), 89–90.

132 "Order Of The Court Of First Instance, 17 December 2003 (Non-Contractual Liability of the Community - Action Manifestly Lacking Any Foundation in Law), Case T-346/03" (Court of Justice of the European Union, December 17, 2003), http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=48869&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=407605

133 "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia) - Overview Of The Case," *International Court of Justice*, accessed September 26, 2017, http://www.icj-cij.org/en/case/118

that the other side had possessed genocidal intent. Furthermore, the Court stated that "…genocide presupposes the intent to destroy a group as such, and not to inflict damage upon it or to remove it from a territory, irrespective of how such actions might be characterized in law."[134] This means that the removal of people from a territory (such as the relocation of Armenians away from sensitive zones during the First World War) does not by itself mean there was genocide, the intent to "destroy a group as such" must be firmly demonstrated first. ICJ's verdict removes genocide claims from the realm of political considerations, and enforces the strict legal requirements necessary for determining genocide.

The Second Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, in its decision dated December 17, 2013 regarding the Perinçek-Switzerland case, noted that the relocation of Armenians in 1915 could not be compared to the Holocaust, which is universally considered as the event that triggered the preparation and the signing of the 1948 Genocide Convention. In the Grand Chamber decision of the same case dated October 15, 2015, the ECtHR additionally stated that it was not authorized to make a judgment on the nature of the 1915 events.

4. Decision the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR): The Second Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights, in its decision dated December 17, 2013 regarding the Perinçek-Switzerland case, noted that the relocation of Armenians in 1915 could not be compared to the Holocaust, which is universally considered as the event that triggered the preparation and the signing of the 1948 Genocide Convention.[135] In the Grand Chamber decision of the same case dated October 15, 2015, the ECtHR additionally stated that it was not authorized to make a judgment on the nature of the 1915 events.[136] The ECtHR's verdict thus enforced the notion that only a competent court as prescribed by the Convention may deem an event as genocide or not.

In spite of the decisions in the aforementioned court cases, the continued persecution or attempts at persecution of Turks in relation to this issue can only be summarized as a lack of respect for the law.

134 "Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia) - Summary of the Judgment of 3 February 2015" (International Court of Justice, February 3, 2015), http://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/118/18450.pdf, 24.

135 "Perinçek v. Switzerland - 27510/08 Judgment 17.12.2013 [Section II]" (European Court of Human Rights, December 17, 2013), https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":["002-9265"]} (Legal summary of the Second Chamber's verdict regarding the Perinçek v. Switzerland Case)

136 "Perinçek v. Switzerland [GC] - 27510/08"

Michael Gunter posits that "to have 1915 events recognized as genocide [is] the only bond strong enough to bind the otherwise territorially, linguistic and religiously diverse Diaspora communities together." Gunter further argues that the "Armenian Diaspora communities, in large part rely on and gain succor from the traumatic events of 1915 because they provide the only glue that binds these disparate linguistic, religious and geographically atomized communities together." He maintains that "the trauma that was 1915 for Armenians is now the bond that unites the Diaspora community." Thus, "the campaign for Armenian genocide recognition issue is the single, most unifying theme that mobilizes the heterogeneous Armenian Diaspora."[137]

• "Hidden" and/or Islamized Armenians in Turkey[138]

Article 14 "The Republic of Turkey shall take all steps necessary to reverse, prevent and punish any attempts to discriminate against, intimidate, or harass ethnic Armenians because of their ethnicity, within its current and future borders and to allow without any hindrance hidden and/or Islamized Armenians to return to their true identities if they so wish and to practice religious and ethnic freedom without restriction or fear of retaliation."[139]

One of the most striking demands in the statement is the enunciation of "hidden and/or Islamized Armenians." It is claimed in the statement that the aforementioned group refrain from revealing their true identity and are afraid to openly practice their religion. In this respect, ARF wants the Republic of Turkey to take all necessary steps for these "hidden" and/or Islamized Armenians to return to their true identities if they so wish.

Since this statement's coming to public attention, many authors have referred to this statement in regard to the Turkish-Armenian relations, especially on the subject of "hidden" and/or Islamized Armenians in Turkey. One of the books written on this subject is *The Hidden Legacy of Lost Armenians in Turkey*. The book was written by Ayşegül Altınay and Fethiye Çetin whose ancestors were adopted by Turkish families during the Armenian relocation.

Fethiye Çetin first published her groundbreaking memoir in Turkey, entitled *My Grandmother* in which she spoke of her grandmother's hidden Armenian

137 Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*, 75.

138 What is meant by the term 'hidden Armenians' is people who, for whichever ever reason they prefer, refrain from disclosing that they have Armenian ancestry.

139 "ARF's Statement of Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide."

identity. The book sparked a conversation among Turks about the fate of the Ottoman Armenians in in 1915. This resulted in an explosion of debate on Islamized Armenians and their legacy in contemporary Muslim families. *The Grandchildren* (translated from Turkish) is a follow-up to *My Grandmother*.[140]

Çetin was born and raised in Turkey and became a lawyer, writer, and human rights activist. The Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies of Ramapo College and the Armenian National Committee (ANC) of New Jersey had co-sponsored a talk by Fethiye Çetin entitled, "Hidden No More: Challenges Facing Islamized Armenians in Turkey" on November 12, 2015 at Ramapo College.[141] Çetin's grandmother, Seher, was an Armenian Christian who was adopted by a Turkish military officer as a child during the Armenian relocation. Her grandmother's roots were discussed at this presentation.[142]

Another book written on this subject is *The Essence of Identity: Islamized and & Hidden Armenians in Turkey*. The book was written by Laurence Ritter from L'Écol des hautes études and sciences sociales (EHESS), and Cafer Sarıkaya from Bosphorus University, Istanbul.[143] Laurence Ritter was likewise invited by AGBU (Armenian General Benevolent Union) to speak in Yerevan, Armenia on October 13, 2016.

Description of "hidden" Armenians

The historian Karen Khanlarian noted that "one who considers himself an Armenian, and is aware of his Armenian origin and routes, is Armenian, indisputably, no matter where he lives, what language he speaks, what his name is, or confession he was forced to accept."[144] Another author, Arsen Artsruni, noted that "an Armenian is one who in his cumulative entity has at least a single element within his overall identity allowing him to declare and admit that he is Armenian."[145]

140 Fethiye Çetin and Ayşe Gül Altınay, "Armenian Studies," in *The Grandchildren: The Hidden Legacy of "lost" Armenians in Turkey*, trans. Maureen Freely (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014).

141 "Cetin to Speak about Challenges Facing Islamized Armenians in NJ," *The Armenian Weekly*, November 6, 2015.

142 "Cetin to Speak about Challenges Facing Islamized Armenians in NJ."

143 Laurence Ritter and Cafer Sarıkaya, *The Essence of Identity: Islamized & Hidden Armenians in Turkey* (Yerevan: Armenian General Benevolent Union, 2016).

144 Ruben Melkonyan, "The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey," *21-St Century* 1, no. 3 (2008): 88.

145 Melkonyan, "The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey," 89; "Արծրունի Աշայկական ինքնության ճգնաժամ քաղաքական հոգեբանա- կան առաջխաղացման փայլուն առիթ," *Եզեքք*, թիվ 2, Երևան, օգոստոս, 2007, թիվ. 128-130

There is another viewpoint put forward by Armen Aivazian, a political scientist, that "An Armenian is one, who adopts Armenia as his unique home country, has a strong psychological attachment to Armenia's land, nation, language and culture, has a feeling of personal responsibility for Armenia's future, and is a carrier of Armenian language and culture."[146]

Such different points of view prove that there is no consensus among Armenian authors on the description of the hidden Armenians. As for the Turkish authors; most of them consider Armenians as Islamized or "hidden" if they have Turkish names and surnames.

Armenian authors have been emphasizing this topic in their articles since 2005. Ruben Melkonyan, from Yerevan State University (YSU) and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences, states that "it should be noted that the issue of apostate Armenians is also a delicate question for Turkey, since it is directly linked with the question of ethnic identity."[147]

The amount of Islamized and/or hidden Armenians

According to Ruben Melkonyan, different sources indicate the number of hidden Armenians in Turkey as being anywhere between 80,000 and 600,000.[148] Another Armenian author Karen Khanlarian indicates that the number of hidden Armenians in Turkey is around two million, of which 700,000-750,000 are hidden Armenians, and 1,300,000 are the Islamized Armenians.[149]

Haykazun Alvrtsyan, Director of the Study Centre for Western Armenian Issues,[150] estimates the number of Armenians living in Turkey as being 3 million,[151] of which more than 1 million are converted Muslims Armenians

146 Melkonyan, "The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey," 89; "Արծրունի Աշայկական ինքնության ճգնաժամ քաղաքական հոգեբանա- կան առաջխաղացման փայլուն առիթ,"128-130.

147 Melkonyan, "The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey," 97.

148 Melkonyan, "The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey," 98.

149 Melkonyan, "The Problem of Islamized Armenians in Turkey," 98; Խանլարի Կ., ՀայբնակչութեանէթնոկրօնականվերակերպումներըԹուր-Քիայիհանրապետութիւնում (1923-2005թթ.), Երեւան, 2005.

150 Armenia and Armenian Diaspora quotes 19 provinces of Turkey as Western Armenia and regards this territory as Armenian soil

151 "Ashot Israelyan, "Haykazun Alvrtsyan; There are more than 3 million Armenians living in Turkey", *Aravot.am*, June 12, 2015, http://en.aravot.am/2015/06/12/170575/

who have accepted their fate and do not want to talk about it, nor others to raise the issue.[152]

These different estimations indicate that Armenian authors have not yet come to any consensus on the number of hidden Armenians in Turkey.

Many Armenian authors and ARF claim that the Republic of Turkey has engaged in discrimination, intimidation, and harassment of ethnic Armenians. Although there have been individual cases of discrimination against Armenians in Turkey on a citizen vs. citizen basis, Turkey has no state policy of discrimination against her citizens on the basis of their ethnicity. On the contrary, there are many examples of Armenians who served in the high-level posts in the Republic of Turkey.

As an example, Berç Keresteciyan was employed by the Ministry of Finance after his graduation from university. When the Turkish Red Crescent was re-established for the third and last time in 1911, Berç Keresteciyan was a co-founder, became the only non-Muslim member of the executive committee and later vice-chairman of the humanitarian institution. With the outbreak of World War One, and the participation of the Ottoman Empire in the war, Berç Keresteciyan served as deputy general manager the Ottoman Bank and later became general manager of the Bank. He served for a period as a Deputy at the Meclis-i Mebusan (the Lower House) of the Ottoman Parliament.

An anecdote is being told about his contribution to save the life of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, as he informed Atatürk's lawyer about a British plot to sink his ship SS Bandırma in the Black Sea, on which Atatürk left Istanbul in 1919 to initiate the Turkish War of Independence. He was awarded the white stripe Medal of Independence after the war. Following the surname reform on June 21, 1934, Atatürk gave Berç Keresteciyan the family name of "Türker" (means "Valiant Turk" in Turkish) for his patriotism.[153] He stood as an independent candidate for a deputy seat from Afyonkarahisar at the 1935 general elections and became a member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly on March 7, 1935 as the first Armenian and one of the four non-Muslims in total. He continued his membership of parliament for two terms more after the general elections in 1939 and 1943. During his political career in the parliament, Berç Türker Keresteciyan made significant contributions to issues of general political, economic, social and international developments.

152 Israelyan, "Haykazun Alvrtsyan; There are more than 3 million Armenians living in Turkey."

153 Fehmi Akın, *Afyonkarahisar milletvekilleri: yaşam öyküleri ve meclisteki faaliyetleri* (İstanbul: IQ Kültür Sanat Yayıncılık, 2009): 107

In connection to Berç Keresteciyan, today, despite the fact that Turkish Armenians make up less than one percent of Turkey's current population, the 550-seat Turkish Grand National Assembly has three members of Armenian ethnicity, one (Markar Eseyan) from the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), and two (Selina Doğan and Garo Paylan) from two of the opposition parties, Republican People's Party (CHP) and Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP).[154] One must question the validity of Armenian authors' and ARF's claim of discrimination by Turkey against Turkish Armenians when there are currently three Turkish Armenian deputies serving in the Turkish parliament.

Agop Martayan Dilaçar is another example. As a linguist, he invited to the first language congress by Atatürk and appointed as the head specialist of the Turkish Language Association in 1934. His surname Dilaçar was given by Atatürk in 1935. He worked as a teacher of language at Ankara University and served as the head advisor of Turkish Encyclopedia. He continued his studies and research on language and his office as the secretary general of Turkish Language Association until his death.[155]

One must question the validity of Armenian authors' and ARF's claim of discrimination by Turkey against Turkish Armenians when there are currently three Turkish Armenian deputies serving in the Turkish parliament.

Torkom Istepanyan, Levon Panos Dabağyan Nerses Yeramyan, Elmas Garagor are the other notable examples of the Armenian citizens of the Republic of Turkey who were content with the Turkish administration and, in many cases, were active in public life, including politics. One study of more than 50 Turkish Armenians found that they were content and prosperous in Turkey and felt patriotic towards their country.[156]

One of those who content with the Turkish administration was Professor Avedis Simon Hacınlıyan, whose testimony deeply affected the members of court of Orly case. In July 15, 1983, a bomb exploded in front of the Turkish Airlines counter at Orly Airport, Paris. The explosion killed eight people, of which four were French, two were Turks, one was Swedish, and one was American, and

154 The individual pages at the Grand National Assembly of Turkey's website of the three deputies are as follows: Markar Eseyan, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.bilgi?p_donem=26&p_sicil=7308; Selina Doğan, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.bilgi?p_donem=26&p_sicil=7116; Garo Paylan, https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/milletvekillerimiz_sd.bilgi?p_donem=26&p_sicil=7274

155 "Agop Dilaçar," *Biyografya*, accessed: September 26, 2017, http://www.biyografya.com/biyografi/15830.

156 Gunter, *Armenian History and the Question of Genocide*.

wounded about sixty people. The court found guilty three ASALA members and sentenced them to life time imprisonment. In the course of trials, the court called for the testimonies of some Turkish academics as experts on the Armenian issue. One of them was Associate Professor Avedis Hacınlıyan.

His testimony below illuminates the situation of the Turkish Armenians in Turkey:

> "I was born in Istanbul in 1944 and attended elementary school, high school and university in Turkey. Following my graduation from the university I went to the University of for graduate studies on a scholarship. After commencing my doctorate I returned to Turkey from United States of my own wish, although I could have located job opportunities abroad with my background. I was first appointed as instructor at the Middle East Technical University. I did my military service as a reserve officer in the Research and Development Section of the Ministry of Defense, a sensitive department where I had access to classified material. After my military duty, I returned to the university. During my childhood, education and my career in the university I have not been subjected to any form of discrimination because of my Armenian origin as openly expressed in my family name. Citizens of Armenian origin carry out their religious obligations freely and govern their foundations such as schools, hospital and churches. The members of the Armenian community are economically in a better shape than the average citizen of Istanbul in particular or Turkey as a whole. The fact that the Armenian community is living comfortably as equal citizens of the Turkish Republic, and is not faced with discrimination."[157]

This testimony is a sincere response to ARF's statement about the Turkish Armenians. Additionally, as a form of protest against the violence perpetrated by the Armenian terrorist organizations in pursuit of their genocide claim, Turkish Armenian Artin Penik set himself on fire in Taksim Square in 1982. He unfortunately passed away from his burn wounds a short while later.

But as for the "hidden "and/or Islamized Armenians the situation is a little bit different. Due to their wish to remain hidden and they fact that they have adopted Islam and assumed Turkish names, it would be very difficult to carry out research regarding them by gaining their consent and it would be difficult to make generalizations regarding them (their outlook on life and Turkey, their numbers etc.)

157 *Terrorist Attack at Orly, Statements and Evidence Presented at the Trial, February 19-March 2, 1985* (Ankara: University of Ankara, Faculty of Political Science, 1985): 33-37.

Recently, some of the hidden Armenians have given up concealing their identity and have started to criticize their parents for giving them Turkish names. One of those people stated to the Istanbul based weekly Agos newspaper that he has changed his previous name from "Selahattin Gültekin" to the Armenian name "Miran Pırgiç Gültekin" and had been baptized 2 years ago. He added that together with 70 others who had switched to their old Armenian identity, they had established an association named "Faith and Social Benevolent Society of Armenians of Dersim." He claims that the number of hidden Armenians in Turkey exceeds 500,000, but there is no need for them to hide themselves anymore.[158] He complained of being criticized by the hidden Armenians among his acquaintances for uncovering their real identity. His admission demonstrates that most of the "hidden" Armenians do not want to return their Armenian origin. It appears that only a small minority prefer returning to their original identity.

CONCLUSION

During the centenary of 1915, the Republic of Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora and their supporters launched a campaign for the recognition of what they term the "Armenian genocide". The Montebello Statement is a prominent example of the campaigns waged by the Armenian Revolutionary Federation.

As Michael Gunter points out**,** the Armenian Diaspora communities rely on and gain profit from the traumatic events of 1915 because they provide the only glue that binds atomized communities together. The ARF's Montebello Statement and demands for recognition of genocide should be evaluated in this context.

Despite the lack of a competent court's verdict regarding the 1915 events and the accusations of genocide and decisions of national and international courts that enforce this legal fact, Armenia and the ARF insist that Turks have committed genocide against Armenians. Armenians would do well to change their approach on the conceptualization of genocide and realize that developing good, or the least functional, relations with Turkey will not possible by making unsubstantiated, incessant accusations. Especially following the decision of the European Court of Human Rights dated 15 October 2015 regarding the Perinçek-Switzerland case, which noted that the forced relocation of Armenians in 1915 cannot be considered genocide, it has become practically impossible for the Armenian Republic and the ARF to force Turkey to recognize the relocations as genocide.

158 "Gizli Ermeniler Gerçek Kimliklerine Dönüyor," *Agos Gazetesi*, February 9, 2012.

On the other hand, the ARF yearns for and demands virtually an empire with vast lands stretching all the way from the Caspian Sea to the Black Sea Mediterranean coasts of present day Turkey. Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora quote 19 provinces of Turkey as "Western Armenia" and regard this territory as Armenian soil. The term "Western Armenia" is to be seen in the Montebello Statement and in the Armenian Declaration of Independence.

By considering a part of the sovereign territory of Turkey as "Western Armenia," the Armenian government and the ARF are in violation of Chapter I, Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations which instructs "all members to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations."

Another groundless claim of the ARF is regarding restitution and economic assistance. Since Turkey and the USA agreed on the amount of compensation in 1933 and after Turkey paid the 9th installment, the USA declared that no more payment was necessary because no more indemnity was left. Resurrecting old issues that have been solved will not help achieve any goal.

It should be mentioned that the Republic of Armenia invaded the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan together with 7 other adjacent regions in overt violation of international legal norms. The ARF also requests from the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan to remove blockades and allow unrestricted access through the borders of Armenia and Nagorno Karabakh. If Turkey opens her borders before Armenia complies with the resolutions of the UN and withdraws her troops from the Karabakh and adjacent 7 regions of Azerbaijan (which contain six cities, 12 towns and 830 settlements) signify that Turkey has accepted the Armenian aggression.

Another demand mentioned in the ARF's statement is about hidden and/or Islamized Armenians. The ARF demands that the Republic of Turkey must take all steps necessary to enable hidden/Islamized Armenians to return to their true identities if they so wish.

Recently, activities of the hidden and Islamized Armenians have started to interest the public. Most of the hidden and Islamized Armenians are apparently content with their Turkish names and are reluctant to return to their true identities. There is no restriction or intimidation for the ones who want to return to their true identities.

Hidden and Islamized Armenians have the right to be baptized and return to their roots by assuming Armenian names. In this respect, allowing the hidden and Islamized Armenians to return to their true identities could be considered to be the only reasonable claim of the ARF in the Montebello Statement.

It seems that from the centenary of 1915 onwards, Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora will hold on to their claims for genocide recognition and will make greater use of parliamentary resolutions of other countries and decisions of international organizations to force the Republic of Turkey to recognize the claimed genocide and to open her border with Armenia. But in view of national and international court decisions which are in favor of Turkey, Armenia and the ARF constitute a serious barrier to the achievement of their goals. It is therefore advisable for Armenia and the Armenian Diaspora to give up unreasonable demands, to comply with the United Nations' resolutions on Karabakh and develop constructive relations with Turkey and Azerbaijan.

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APPENDIX

(EK BELGE)

"ARF'S STATEMENT OF DEMANDS FOR JUSTICE FOR THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE"[1]

("EDF'NİN ERMENİ SOYKIRIMINA İLİŞKİN ADALETİN SAĞLANMASI İÇİN TALEPLER BİLDİRİSİ")

MONTEBELLO–The Armenian Revolutionary Federation Western US's 49th Regional Convention on Sunday unanimously approved a statement delineating the organization's list of demands for justice on the eve of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide. Below is the text of that statement:

Armenian Revolutionary Federation Western U.S.A. Statement Of Demands For Justice For The Armenian Genocide

WHEREAS, the Armenian Nation was subjected to a systematic and premeditated Genocide officially beginning on April 24, 1915, at the hands of the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire from 1915-1919 and continued at the hands of the Kemalist Movement of Turkey from 1920-1923 whereby over 1.5 million Armenian men, women and children were slaughtered or marched to their deaths in an effort to annihilate the Armenian Nation in the First Genocide of modern times, while thousands of surviving Armenian women and children were forcibly converted and Islamized, and hundreds of thousands more were subjected to ethnic cleansing during the period of the modern Republic of Turkey from 1924-1937; and

WHEREAS, the planning and implementation of Genocide is indisputably recognized in international law as a Crime Against Humanity and is punishable as such; and

WHEREAS, this Genocidal Crime Against Humanity has remained unpunished for nearly one hundred years, as the Government of Turkey is allowed with impunity to distort history and to deny the Genocide and its consequences perpetrated both by its Ottoman predecessor and its own predecessor regimes despite international recognition of the Armenian Genocide by 23 countries, including the United States of America; and

1 "ARF's Statement of Demands For Justice for the Armenian Genocide," *Asbarez*, June 23, 2014, http://asbarez.com/124379/arfs-statement-of-demands-for-justice-for-the-armenian-genocide/

WHEREAS, Armenians were the indigenous and native inhabitants of their ancestral homeland for thousands of years preceding the Armenian Genocide as evidenced by the ruins of hundreds of ancient Armenian churches, monasteries, cemeteries and other readily identifiable religious and cultural structures, sites and antiquities still remaining on such land as proof of their ongoing presence there up until the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, the ancestral homeland of the Armenian People, and especially the six historically Armenian regions of Van, Erzerum, Kharpert, Bitlis, Dikranagerd-Diyarbakir, and Sepastia-Sivas, all within the current borders of the Republic of Turkey, have been stripped of their native inhabitants by virtue of the Armenian Genocide, except for thousands of Islamized or hidden Armenians who have been subjected to silent oppression, while some of whom have recently begun to acknowledge their true ethnic identities and should be encouraged to return to their roots; and

WHEREAS, the ancestral Homeland of the Armenian People continues to be illegally occupied by the Republic of Turkey which makes every attempt to erase any proof of the historic Armenian presence on such land; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Nation survived the Genocide despite the attempt by Ottoman Turkey and the modern Republic of Turkey to exterminate it; and

WHEREAS, the survival of the Armenian Nation from the horrors of Genocide was due in significant part to American and international efforts spearheaded by Near East Relief, an organization created and sanctioned in 1916 by the United States Congress which rescued over 132,000 Armenian orphans and hundreds of thousands of Armenian refugees who went on to survive and thrive outside of their ancestral homeland all over the world and specifically within the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the First Independent Republic of Armenia was internationally recognized in the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide through the Treaty of Sevres; and

WHEREAS, Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, issued his final and binding Arbitral Award on November 22, 1920, restoring some of the territorial rights of the Armenian Nation taken from it by the Government of the Ottoman Empire as a consequence of the Armenian Genocide, by redrawing international borders to include the provinces of Van, Erzerum, Bitlis, and Trabzon with access to the Black Sea within the Republic of Armenia; and

WHEREAS, despite its legally binding terms, the Wilsonian Arbitral Award was never enforced, and the Turkish occupation of the lands which legally belong to Armenia continues in blatant violation thereof to date; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian People, individually and collectively, have been deprived of their real and personal property, culture and life on their ancestral Homeland for nearly a century since the Armenian Genocide; and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation of the Western United States consists mostly of members who are the direct descendants of those survivors of the Armenian Genocide who eventually immigrated to the United States of America and who, as U.S. citizens, and as the largest organized community of the Armenian Diaspora, have the right to demand justice in the name of the Armenian Nation, including but not limited to the implementation of the Wilsonian Arbitral Award, and petitioning the U.S. Government at local, State and Federal levels to do so; and

WHEREAS, the Government of Turkey continues its predecessor governments' campaign of Genocide and attempted destruction of the Armenian Nation with impunity by:

(a) illegally occupying Western Armenia;

(b) illegally blockading the western border of the current second independent Republic of Armenia;

(c) aiding and abetting the Republic of Azerbaijan, its co-conspirator and accomplice, in its illegal blockade of the eastern border of the current second independent Republic of Armenia;

(d) aiding and abetting the Republic of Azerbaijan, its co-conspirator and accomplice, in its illegal blockade of the current independent Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh);

(e) aiding and abetting the Republic of Azerbaijan, its co-conspirator and accomplice, in its attempt to erase any proof of the historical presence of the Armenian Nation and its rightful claims to Nakhichevan, including but not limited to the destruction with impunity of the ancient Armenian cemetery at Djulfa by the Azeri military;

(f) aiding and abetting the Republic of Azerbaijan, its co-conspirator and accomplice, in perpetrating and then engaging in a campaign of denial

and distortion of massacres perpetrated against the indigenous Armenian populations of Baku, Sumgait and Kirovabad;

(g) aiding and abetting radicalized militant action and ethnic cleansing against the indigenous Armenian population of Kessab and other parts of Syria;

(h) failing to bring to justice the perpetrators of the murder of Hrant Dink, a crime linked to the highest levels of the Turkish State;

(i) continuing its silent oppression and intimidation of hidden and Islamized Armenians, most of whom fear revealing their true identities or practicing religious freedom under threat of retaliation; and

(j) generally taking any and all steps within its power to eradicate any proof of the historical presence and valid claims of the Armenian Nation as a consequence of the Genocide perpetrated against it; and

WHEREAS, the Peace & Democracy Party (BDP), the current leading party of the Kurdish population of Turkey, should be acknowledged and encouraged for its formal adoption as a part of its party platform an acknowledgement and apology for the role of the Kurdish population in the Armenian Genocide, a plan to try to restore some of the property rights of the Armenian Nation, and a call upon the Government of Turkey to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide and offer restitution; and

WHEREAS, the municipal government of the City of Diyarbakir (Dikranagerd) in Turkey, democratically controlled by the Kurdish Peace & Democracy Party, has in fact recently taken concrete steps toward reconciliation by restoring the Armenian Sourp Giragos Cathedral, erecting a monument to victims of Genocide, allowing and encouraging Armenian language and religion classes to be held for Islamized or hidden Armenians, erecting a highway welcome sign into the City in Armenian, and other such measures for which it should be commended and encouraged; and

WHEREAS, the current geopolitical conflicts in the Near East and Middle East have the significant potential of resulting in a redrawing of international borders in the region which can and should include the Western Armenian homeland and an independent Kurdistan which would necessitate dialogue, cooperation and peaceful co-existence based on a concrete framework for reparations and restitution as outlined herein;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that on the eve of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide widely recognized as April 24, 2015, and on behalf of the descendants of the Armenian Genocide currently living in the Western United States of America, the Regional Convention of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation of the Western United States hereby delineates its Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide, as follows:

1. The Republic of Turkey must unequivocally acknowledge and bear the consequences of the Armenian Genocide planned and implemented by the Young Turk Government of the Ottoman Empire from 1915-1919, continued to be perpetrated by the Kemalist Movement from 1920-1923, and leading to ethnic cleansing by its own predecessor regime of the modern Republic of Turkey from 1924-1937.

2. The Republic of Turkey must take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution to the Armenian Nation for its Genocidal Crime Against Humanity, fully acknowledging that any attempt at restitution cannot possibly restore the Armenian Nation to the quality of national life and quantity of numbers it would have enjoyed but-for the Genocide perpetrated against it, but nevertheless showing good faith in attempting to right the wrongs of history by restoring all rights taken from the Armenian Nation.

3. Restitution of territorial property rights of the Armenian Nation shall include the redrawing of international borders on the basis of the final and binding Arbitral Award of United States President Woodrow Wilson issued on November 22, 1920, including but not limited to reunification with the Republic of Armenia of the territories and provinces of Van, Bitlis, Erzerum and Trabzon to provide unrestricted access to the Black Sea, as well as the regions of Kars and Ardahan from within the borders of the First Independent Republic of Armenia, and including Mount Ararat and its surrounding territories.

4. Complete and unequivocal restoration of territorial property rights of the Armenian Nation shall include recognition of the independence and international sovereignty of the Republic of Nagorno Karabakh (Artsakh) and its current borders.

5. Complete and unequivocal restoration of territorial property rights of the Armenian Nation shall include Nakhichevan.

6. Complete and unequivocal restoration of the aforementioned property rights shall include unrestricted and free access and use of all natural resources and natural and man-made avenues of transportation, movement and land use.

7. The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan shall acknowledge, protect and preserve the hundreds of ancient Armenian churches, monasteries, cemeteries and other historical and cultural structures, sites and antiquities within their current and future borders at their expense and shall refrain from making, encouraging or tolerating any attempts to destroy, deface, or eradicate them.

8. The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan shall immediately remove any and all blockades of Armenia and Artsakh and allow unrestricted access through their borders and take other such good faith measures to normalize and cultivate relations amongst said countries anchored in a full and complete acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide, its consequences, and an overall plan for just reparations as outlined herein.

9. The Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Azerbaijan shall refrain from taking any military or other action to provoke cross-border violence or in any way disrupt the peace with the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Artsakh.

10. The Republic of Turkey shall restore to the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul, the Holy See of the Great House of Cilicia, and/or any other entity designated by duly appointed representatives of the Armenian Nation full and unencumbered property rights and access to all Armenian churches, monasteries, cemeteries and other religious, faith-based, historical or cultural structures, sites and antiquities within its current and future borders, waiving any demands and exempting them from any past and future property taxes or other such potential obligations as a part of its measures toward restitution.

11. The Republic of Turkey must make financial restitution to the descendants of the victims of the Armenian Genocide or their designated community or organizational representatives and provide economic assistance to the Republic of Armenia in amounts and manners to be determined by a duly appointed international tribunal assembled for this purpose.

12. The Republic of Turkey shall provide unrestricted access to its judicial system and courts for any descendants of the victims of the Armenian Genocide, individually and collectively, or any representative organizations or entities of the Armenian People to assert real and personal property rights without regard to and with a complete waiver of any statutes of limitation, theories of abandonment, adverse possession and/or any laws which existed either during the Ottoman period and/or post-Ottoman Republic of Turkey, or any other legal hindrances that may affect the validity of such claims.

13. The Republic of Turkey shall adopt as a part of its national educational system a full and complete acknowledgement of the Armenian Genocide and the consequences thereof and shall allow and encourage open and frank dialogue and research concerning this dark chapter of its history.

14. The Republic of Turkey shall take all steps necessary to reverse, prevent and punish any attempts to discriminate against, intimidate, or harass ethnic Armenians because of their ethnicity, within its current and future borders and to allow without any hindrance hidden and/or Islamized Armenians to return to their true identities if they so wish and to practice religious and ethnic freedom without restriction or fear of retaliation;

15. The Republic of Turkey shall designate April 24 of each year as a Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Armenian Genocide and shall permit and encourage unrestricted commemorative events within its current and future borders, starting with April 24, 2015, the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

With full and prompt implementation of these aforementioned Demands for Justice for the Armenian Genocide, the Armenian Nation can finally move toward a genuine, durable and lasting reconciliation and peaceful coexistence with the Turkish, Azeri and Kurdish populations of the region.

June 22, 2014