

FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

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Abstract: *This article studies Turkey-Armenia relations during the second half of 2016, some countries' stance concerning Armenian genocide allegations, and latest developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh issue.*

Keywords: *Turkey-Armenia relations, USA, Germany, France, Israel, Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Nagorno-Karabakh Issue*

Öz: *Bu yazı 2016 yılının ikinci yarısında Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerini, Ermeni soykırımı iddialarına ilişkin bazı ülkelerin tutumlarını ve Karabağ sorunu konusundaki son gelişmeleri incelemektedir.*

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Türkiye-Ermenistan İlişkileri, ABD, Almanya, Fransa, İsrail, Mısır, Lübnan, Suriye, Karabağ Sorunu*

ARTICLES

1- TURKEY-ARMENIA RELATIONS

We will analyze relations between the two countries in two sections, namely, statements by state officials and Armenia's demands from Turkey.

1.1- Statements by State Officials

The anti-Turkish climate, which was created in Armenian and the Diaspora due to the activities to commemorate the centennial of the Armenian relocation, continued during second half of 2016, and Armenian state officials, including President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, tried to criticize Turkey on every occasion. On the other hand, Turkey generally remained silent in the field of bilateral relations. We had previously stated that Turkey's relations with Armenia were not even included in the 65th Government program of the Turkish Government and these relations were associated with developments in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as it was stated in the government program that Turkey will continue to strive for the cessation of the occupation of Azerbaijani territories and the ending of tensions between Azerbaijan and Armenia.¹

President Sargsyan's recent interview with Sputnik Armenia on Turkey-Armenia relations was especially attention-grabbing. In brief, Armenia's President stated that until 2009, several friendly nations were saying that Armenia did not want to establish any relations with the Turks and that Armenia had a genocide complex. Mentioning that the Protocols were signed despite opposition from the Diaspora, Sargsyan stated Turkey did not fulfill its obligations and wanted the security zone to be returned to Azerbaijan (the term "security zone" represents the seven Azerbaijani districts/rayons surrounding Karabakh, which is currently occupied by Armenians). Indicating that whether the borders will be closed in case of another conflict does not depend on Armenia, he stated that this issue (the return of the security zone to Azerbaijan) should have been brought up prior to the signing of the Protocols, during the negotiation process. Sargsyan added that after that, there was no relations left between Turkey and Armenia and the officials of the two countries just greeted each other if they come across each other during international conferences.²

1 Ömer Engin Lütem, "Facts and Comments", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 33, p. 18-19.

2 "Serj Sarkisyan, Ermeni-Türk sınırının açılmasını istiyor", *News.am*, 17.11.2016

Repeating his wish for the opening of Armenian-Turkish borders, Sargsyan said: *“I want Turkish youth to understand that they are not to blame for the fact that the Armenian Genocide was carried out in the Ottoman Empire. Because in fact, what is the blame of the Turkish youth?”* Since modern-day Turks, including Turkish youth, are not responsible for the Armenian relocation that took place a hundred years ago, and since no one feels guilty for it, it is difficult to make sense out of Sargsyan’s statements.

A short while after these statements by Sargsyan, President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan gave the following answer to an Azerbaijani journalist’s question about Armenia’s occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh:

*As you know, there are resolutions by the UN Security Council on this issue. Considering all these resolutions, Armenia should abandon Nagorno-Karabakh and leave immediately those rayons that were agreed upon. They should be returned to their original owners, the Azerbaijanis. Azerbaijanis should return to their homes. Nothing can be achieved through occupations, which is the case in these regions. We, as Turkey, are against this occupation. Particularly, the US, Russia and France should finalize the duty that they assumed as soon as possible. It is my wish that this occupation ends and that our Azerbaijani brothers and sisters return to their homes.*³

Since modern-day Turks, including Turkish youth, are not responsible for the Armenian relocation that took place a hundred years ago, and since no one feels guilty for it, it is difficult to make sense out of Sargsyan’s statements.

Thus, Turkey’s position on the Karabakh conflict was repeated once more in the highest level.

For a long time, MPs of Armenia that have been attending meetings of international organizations are observed to defend their country’s policies in an aggressive manner with statements and questions that aim to provoke their addressees.

For instance, a similar attitude was observed during the 62nd annual session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly in November. Responding to MP of Armenia Koryun Nahapetyan’s question *“does Turkey support Daesh?”*, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu urged Nahapetyan to

³ “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan’dan Ermenistan’a net mesaj: İşgal ile bir yere varılmaz”, *Trend.az*, 23.11.2016.

be honest and said that Turkey was waging the most active fight against Daesh with most terrorist kills, and that Daesh hated Turkey. Çavuşoğlu then reminded that Armenia was occupying 20 percent of Azerbaijan's territories, and that they proposed to open the borders if Armenia withdraws from the occupied territories.

Furthermore, mentioning that Armenia was constantly bringing up the genocide allegations, Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu pointed out that Armenia has said "no" to Turkey's proposal to establish a commission to investigate the genocide allegations, and said: *"You prefer a lie. You do not trust upon yourselves. Since you do not believe in scientific studies, you prefer a lie."* Çavuşoğlu also informed that among the PKK terrorists caught and killed by Turkey were Armenians.⁴

Thereby, the question asked by the MP of Armenia with the aim of putting the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs in a difficult position gave Çavuşoğlu the opportunity to explain Turkey's policies.

1.2- Armenia's Demands from Turkey

As it is known, following the failure of the protocols, President Sargsyan, unlike the previous Armenian governments, has begun to bring forward demands from Turkey since 2010. These demands can be summarized as the Turkey's recognition of the "Armenian genocide" and dealing with its consequences (reparations and return of properties). Furthermore, a state commission presided by President Sargsyan that would coordinate the commemoration events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the relocation was charged with preparing the legal justifications for these demands. Although three years has since passed, these justifications remain unannounced, and demands from Turkey are yet to be made.

This situation can be perhaps due to the following reasons:

- a. Following the European Court of Human Right's (ECtHR) decision on the *Perinçek v. Switzerland* case, Armenia's long-standing arguments with regards to the genocide hypothesis, such as that it was similar to the Holocaust, are no longer compelling.

4 "Ermeni Vekilin Sözleri Çavuşoğlu'nu Çileden Çıkartrt: Dürüst Olun!", *Sondakika.com*, 19.11.2016, <http://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-disisleri-bakani-cavusoglu-ndan-ermeni-8976314/>

- b. Propounding these demands, which will inevitably cause serious tensions between Turkey and Armenia, may have been deemed inappropriate in this period of clashes in Karabakh. Furthermore, it is possible that these demands are deemed inappropriate by the US, Russia, and even the EU.
- c. As long as the Armenian demands are not supported by the major powers, they will never be accepted, let alone considered. Foremost among these major powers is Russia, which is commonly assumed to ensure the security of Armenia. However, there are several disagreements that are widely known by those who follow developments in the region, but which are purposefully withheld from the public. These can be summarized as follows: Russia's arms sales to Azerbaijan; Russia's apparent support for the return of some of the Azerbaijani rayons occupied by Armenia to Azerbaijan; criticisms by the Muslim members of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), especially Kazakhstan, against Armenia for the Karabakh conflict; the fact that the CSTO chairmanship did not pass to Armenia although it was supposed to and thus, the extension of the term of office of Russian General Secretary Borodyuzha.
- d. Armenia's joining of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) instead of being an associate member of the European Union (EU) did not provide the expected benefit. Furthermore, Armenia and Russia have failed to cooperate sufficiently in the economic field.
- e. Despite Armenia's objections, Russia has begun to lean towards the idea of Turkey contributing to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict.
- f. Several developments that took place in Armenia's internal politics have been so significant to the degree that it can cause new problems in foreign relations. The clashes that began on 17 June 2016 due to an attack by an armed group opposing the government's Karabakh policy, the resulting death of 3 and injury of 100, and the fact that situation was taken under control by security forces after two weeks can be shown among these developments. As a result of this incident, the Prime Minister was forced to resign and a new government was formed with difficulty.

In short, Armenia is currently facing serious problems. Therefore, there is no suitable grounds to bring forward demands against Turkey, which have no urgency or priority and which are in fact unrealistic. However, Armenia still

persists in these demands. Presently, Armenia appears to prefer not to lay emphasis on the demands.

On the other, Armenians may also be waiting for an anniversary to draw attention to the demands, such as 2018 (the 100th anniversary of the founding of the first Republic of Armenia), 2020 (the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Sevres), and even 2023 (the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of Turkey).

In Turkey, on the other hand, these unserious demands that have almost no chance of being realized are not dwelled upon, and as mentioned above, relations with Armenia are associated with developments in the Karabakh conflict.

1.3- The Demand by the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia from Turkey

In 2015, the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia had appealed to the Constitutional Court of Turkey and demanded the return of properties (church, monastery, etc.) located in Kozan (Sis) in Turkey, which it had previously abandoned during the First World War.

Reaching a verdict on 15 June 2016, the Constitutional Court announced the justification for its verdict on December and found the demand unacceptable due to the Catholicosate not exhausting internal remedies. According to the verdict, the Catholicosate should have applied to the relevant Turkish courts, appealed against their verdicts if necessary, and should have only appealed to the Constitutional Court in the end.

As mentioned above, although Armenia has been preparing to make demands from Turkey, it is yet to declare these demands. Catholicos of Cilicia Aram I, taking advantage of the independent status of the Church and acting upon the urge of being the first Armenian institution to make demands against Turkey, appealed to the Constitutional Court of Turkey without first applying to the Turkish courts, and applied to the European Court of Human Rights following the negative decision of the Constitutional Court.⁵

When looked closely, it is difficult to understand why it took a century to demand the return of above-mentioned properties. The Catholicosate of Cilicia, which is now located in Antelias near Beirut in the best of conditions, does not need the buildings in Kozan. Furthermore, since there is no Armenian

5 “Les Arméniens Entendent Récupérer Leur Vatican En Turquie”, *Armenews*, 11.12.2016.

population worthy of note in and around Kozan, there is no congregation to benefit from these buildings. Therefore, it is understood that Aram I is acting based on political, not religious motivations. As a matter of fact, in a speech he gave in 2014, Aram I said: *“even if they lose the case it will be a victory since the opening of the case will show the international community that the Armenians are committed to demanding the rights of the Armenian nation no matter how many years may pass since the genocide.”*⁶ Moreover, in another speech, he said that he will not accept indemnities in return for these buildings and that these building will be used for religious purposes. As we have mentioned above, it is virtually impossible for those buildings to be used for religious purposes since there is no Armenian population in the region. Yet, Aram I is apparently bent on turning these buildings into a problem.

2- DEVELOPMENTS IN CERTAIN COUNTRIES WITH REGARD TO THE ARMENIAN GENOCODE ALLEGATIONS

2.1- The United States

We will analyze the developments in the United States under four headings, namely, Armenians and the US presidential election, attempts to indirectly recognize the genocide allegations, the pardoning of a terrorist, and freedom of expression in the US state of California.

2.1.1- Armenians and the US Presidential Election

Before each presidential election, Armenians of the US always try to get a written or public statement from the presidential candidates on their support for the Armenian demands, especially about the “genocide”, in the event that they are elected. As a matter of fact, Barack Obama, although making such a statement prior to his election, had refrained from openly supporting the Armenian allegations in view of relations with Turkey.

The same method was employed during this year’s presidential elections, but neither Donald Trump nor Hillary Clinton made any statements in this respect.⁷

6 “Catholicosate of Cilicia to Sue Turkey Over Historic Headquarters in Sis”, *Armenian Weekly*, 19.09.2014.

7 “Appel Entre le Vice-President Mike Pence et Serge Sarkissian”, *Armenews*, 05.12.2016.

According to one source, Armenians tried to campaign against Donald Trump during the elections.⁸ However, immediately after Donald Trump won the elections, Armenian organizations began to passionately congratulate him.

Meanwhile, ANCA (Armenian National Committee of America), which is an extension of the Dashnaks, announced that they will pressure Washington for its support for the recognition of the “Armenian genocide” and Karabakh’s right to self-determination.⁹

Yet, it is seen that the Armenians of the US have not established significant contacts with President-elect Trump and his entourage. As a consequence,

Armenian state officials, since they generally use the mediation of the Diaspora in their political contacts with the US (and other countries), are not well-acquainted with Trump and his team. This has rendered the establishment of contracts with the President-elect and his entourage difficult.

It is understood from this incident that Trump did not find it necessary to talk with the president of a country that is as small as Armenia with no weight in the international arena, but that the Vice-President called Sargsyan to not cause disrespect.

Following Donald Trump’s victory in the elections, like numerous heads of state, Presidents Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and İlham Aliyev called and congratulated him and discussed common issues. Although this was

the normal to contact, it came as a surprise that the newly-elected Vice-President Mike Pence instead called Sargsyan. According to one source,¹⁰ Sargsyan requested a conversation with Trump to congratulate him, but failed to talk to him, and after a while, Pence called Sargsyan back. It is understood from this incident that Trump did not find it necessary to talk with the president of a country that is as small as Armenia with no weight in the international arena, but that the Vice-President called Sargsyan to not cause disrespect.

As a result, it is seen that President Sargsyan and other Armenian officials will have difficulties in establishing contacts with the new US government, at least in the first months.

8 Alexander Murinson, “Special Report – The Armenian Lobby’s Tenuous Relations With President-Elect Trump”, *The Armenian Spectator*, 08.12.2016.

9 “Appel Entre le Vice-President Mike Pence et Serge Sarkissian”, *Armenews*, 05.12.2016.

10 Elmira Tariverdiyeva, “Yerevan’s Failed Phone Call or Why Trump did not Respond”, *Trend.az*, 06.12.2016.

2.1.2- Attempts to Indirectly Recognize the Genocide Allegations

During the days when the Obama administration was leaving office, US Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Samantha Power, in a speech at a ceremony in memory of famous author and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel, listed the “Genocide denial against the Armenians” among her examples of injustices against humanity. Since Power is currently is on an important official duty, her statements led to comments such as “Has the Obama administration quietly recognized the Armenian Genocide?”¹¹ However, upon statements by Mark Toner, US State Department spokesman, and Curtis Cooper, spokesman for Samantha Power, that Power’s statements did not represent a change in US policy,¹² the issue was dropped before it caused tension between Turkey and the US.

A renowned author, Samantha Power won the Pulitzer Prize for her book published in 2004 and titled *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. This book included a long passage that reflected Armenian views on the “Armenian genocide”. Following the publication of the book, Armenians have always supported Samantha Power, and she made use of this support in the form of votes for Barack Obama.¹³

Contrary to the expectations of Armenians, President Obama, taking into consideration Turkey’s importance in the Middle East and its NATO membership, has never publicly recognized the Armenian genocide allegations. Like his predecessors Bill Clinton and George W. Bush, Barack Obama continued to issue statements on April 24 each year, but never used the term “genocide”. However, he used words synonymous to “genocide” and the term “Medz Yeghernt, which is understood to be one of the Armenian equivalents of genocide. While the Turks were pleased to some extent with this attitude, Armenians were unsatisfied. President Obama’s attitude was criticized especially by the Dashnaks. Meanwhile, both Hillary Clinton, who recognized the Armenian genocide allegations prior to becoming Secretary of State, and her successor John Kerry were obliged to follow Obama’s approach. As a result, no progress was made in terms of Armenian demands during the Obama administration (2008-2016).

It appears that some Armenians hold Samantha Power responsible from this situation. It is possible that Power, whose term is about to end, spoke of the

11 “AP: Has Obama administration quietly recognized Armenian Genocide?”, *PanArmenian.net*, 06.12.2016, <http://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/227475/>

12 “ABD’nin İkinci En Üst Düzey Diplomatı Ermeni Soykırımı’nı Tanıdı”, *Ermenihaber.am*, 06.12.2016.

13 “Obama’s UN Envoy Refers to 1915 Events As ‘Genocide’”, *Daily Sabah*, 06.12.2016.

“Genocide denial against the Armenians” in order to re-establish better relations with Armenians.

2.1.3- The Pardoning of a Terrorist

The murder of Turkish Consul-General to Los Angeles Mehmet Baydar and his Deputy Bahadır Demir on 27 January 1973 in Santa Barbara, California by an Armenian had initiated the terrorist campaign by extremist Armenians against Turkish diplomats.

Nine years later, Turkish Consul-General Kemal Arıkan was also murdered in Los Angeles by an Armenian terrorist. The murderer Hampig Sassounian was caught and as a result of his trial, was sentenced to life imprisonment on 4 January 1984.

Sassounian, who showed no remorse for the murder, became eligible for parole after admitting his guilt and apologizing after twenty years. According to the American legal system, parole is granted by the relevant court following a hearing in which the sides are present and express their opinions. Sassounian has been defended by the best attorneys with the funds of the Armenians of Los Angeles. While Kemal Arıkan’s family did not attend the hearings, attorneys representing the Turkish state have made necessary interventions to prevent the release of the murderer. Sassounian’s previous appeals for parole were rejected in 2006, 2010, 2013, and 2014. However, Sassounian was granted parole in the final hearing on 14 December 2016.¹⁴ In the event that this decision is approved, the decision will be implemented and the murderer will be free after 34 years.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs reacted strongly to the decision for the release of the murderer with the below statement:

No: 322, 15 December 2016, Press Release Regarding the Decision to Grant Parole to Hampig Sassounian Who Assassinated Consul-General of Turkey in Los Angeles, Kemal Arıkan

We regret that Hampig Sassounian, who assassinated Mr Kemal Arıkan, the Turkish Consul-General in a heinous attack on January 28, 1982 has been granted parole as a result of a parole hearing held on December 14, 2016 in California. We strongly denounce and reject this

¹⁴ “California Issues Parole for Armenian Terrorist Serving Life Sentence for Turkish Diplomat’s Murder”, *Daily Sabah*, 15.12.2016.

decision which is subject to the approval of the Governor of California and will be open to appeal.

This unfortunate decision, which is based on local political dynamics instead of universal principles of justice, is not only unjust but also does not comply with the spirit of cooperation and the fight against terrorism. In order to rectify this mistake before it is finalized, we expect that the US authorities lodge an appeal and the release of Sassounian be averted.

During the trial, it was established without any doubt that Sassounian, had acted knowingly and deliberately, and had murdered Consul-General Arikan in coldblood simply because he was a Turkish national. Sassounian, throughout his incarceration, has not shown any remorse for the crime he committed, but also has continued to glorify the distorted ideology which drove him into this terrorist act.

It is clear that the release of terrorist Sassounian, will first and foremost hurt deeply the family of our martyred diplomat, as well as the Turkish nationals, and will also lead to public indignation.

Consul-General Arikan was a victim of a terrorist mindset targeting not only him but all Turkish diplomats who strive to serve their country. The pertinent US authorities, who suffered similar losses and with whom we cooperate on counter-terrorism, need to assess the gravity and delicacy of the matter thoroughly, as well as what the finalization of the decision would stand for.

We hereby remember with respect and gratitude our martyred diplomat Kemal Arikan and all our martyres who fell victim to terrorism.

FAs it is seen, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs lays emphasis on the fact that the decision does not comply with the fight against terrorism that has gained a special importance at the present time. Furthermore, it is pointed out that Arikan was murdered simply because he was Turkish. The decision is also denounced and rejected, and stated that the decision is expected to be rectified before it is finalized.

2.1.4- Freedom of Expression in California, United States

California is the state with the most Armenian population in the US. Although Armenians do not have the voting power to have an Armenian elected to the

Senate or the House of Representatives, they vote in such a manner that affects elections in certain constituencies. Furthermore, Armenians, although few, are elected to local parliaments. It should be also reminded that an Armenian by the name of George Deukmejian (Dökmeciyan) served as the Governor of California between 1983 and 1991. It is known that Armenians were appointed to certain important positions in California during Deukmejian's governorship.

The Armenian Church in America is divided into two major parts named as "Prelacy". One of these Prelacies is located in California, and its Archbishop, Moushegh Mardirossian, is a very active person with regard to the "Armenian cause". The Dashnak Party is also powerful in California. The fact that more than 100,000 Armenians held demonstrations in front of Consulate-General of Turkey in Los Angeles for the centenary of the Armenian relocation proves this party's power in the state. As a result, Armenians have the environment in the State of California, especially in Los Angeles, to conduct all kinds of activities for their "cause" by virtue of the liberal system in the US. Furthermore, Armenians believe that they have the right to prevent, by force if necessary, any event they deem unsuitable, and to threaten, even kill, those people whose thoughts and conducts they dislike, and in fact, they act upon this belief.

The above-mentioned murders of Consul-General to Los Angeles Mehmet Baydar and his Deputy Bahadır Demir in 1973, and Consul-General Kemal Arıkan in 1982 can be shown as examples of Armenian acts of killings. Can terrorism perpetrated by such extreme-minded Armenians (Armenian terrorism) be revived? Since anti-terrorism in America has become stronger following the September 11 attacks in 2001, it is difficult to think of a revival in Armenian terrorism.

However, acts or expressions of thoughts contrary to Armenian interests draw the strong reaction of Armenians, especially those of Los Angeles, and are prevented, if necessary, through the use of force. Below are several examples reflecting this situation.¹⁵

The most recent example is cancellation by the California State University Northridge (CSUN) of Professor Gawrych's lecture on his book titled *The Young Atatürk: From Ottoman Soldier to Statesman of Turkey*, which was

15 Ferruh Demirmen, "Academic Freedom: Incidents at California University on Atatürk Talk Reminder of Sordid Past", *Turkish NY*, 15.12.2016, <http://www.turkishny.com/english-news/5-english-news/229713-academic-freedom-incident-at-california-university-on-ataturk-talk-reminder-of-sordid-past>

scheduled to take place on 10 November 2016 at CSUN, following demonstrations by Armenian students.

The earliest example, on the other hand, is the case of famous historian Professor Stanford Shaw in 1977, in which he was threatened by Armenian students for his lectures, his house was bombed, and was forced to take an early retirement and to take refuge in Turkey. It should be noted that Consul-General to Los Angeles Mehmet Baydar and his Deputy Bahadır Demir were murdered four years prior to, and Consul-General Kemal Arıkan was murdered five years later from the incidents in 1977 concerning Shaw.

It is possible to give more examples of such cases. We will touch up to one more such incident. In 2006, a lecture by President of the Center for Eurasian Strategic Studies (ASAM) Ambassador (R) Gündüz Aktan and this author (as the President of Institute for Armenian Research (ERAREN)) that was organized by and scheduled to take place at the University of Southern California (USC), was cancelled hours before its start by the university due to objections redolent with threats by ANCA (Armenian National Committee of America), a subsidiary organization of the Dashnak Party.

The earliest example, on the other hand, is the case of famous historian Professor Stanford Shaw in 1977, in which he was threatened by Armenian students for his lectures, his house was bombed, and was forced to take an early retirement and to take refuge in Turkey.

These incidents show that freedom of expression is relative in California, and that a politically powerful group can limit this freedom when needed. It is difficult to understand why such incidents that seriously harm the freedom of expression are tolerated in the United States, which is known for its freedom of expression and as a country that takes pride in this.

2.2- Germany

As mentioned in the previous issues of this journal,¹⁶ the disagreement which arose between Turkey and Germany due to Armenian genocide allegations has virtually turned into a crisis in recent months. There is no doubt that the increasing Turcophobia and Islamophobia in Germany have a role in this. However, it is unknown how German politicians explain the terrible relations with Turkey, with which Germany for years has alliance ties and has

¹⁶ Ömer Engin Lütem, "Facts and Comments", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 32, p. 69-72; Lütem, "Facts and Comments", Issue 33, p. 24-31.

maintained economic and trade relations, and which is the homeland of more than one million Turks who chose German citizenship. Furthermore, it is not known how they explain Germany's embrace July 15 coup plotters as well as PKK terrorists, which Germany itself lists as illegal. It is seen that these contradictory behaviors are obstructing the traditional friendship and cooperation between Turkey and Germany.

Following the recognition of (once again) the Armenian genocide allegations by the German Federal Assembly on 2 June 2016, a regression is also observed in intercommunal relations between the two countries similar to the one in official relations. While putting forward idealist reasons against Turkey, such as respecting human rights and safeguarding democracy, Germany, in reality, has begun to pursue a policy resulting in discrimination and alienation of foreigners, even if they are its own citizens. For instance, President of Germany Joachim Gauck, who uncommonly meddles in current politics, openly supports the Armenian genocide allegations, and therefore causes tensions between Germany and Turkey,¹⁷ once more caused quite a stir when he received and congratulated a Turkish journalist, who was sentenced by court and therefore fled to Germany, in front of the TV cameras and stated that he was worried about developments in Turkey.¹⁸ Considering the fact that the legal process regarding the journalist still continues, this incident is an insult, going beyond an act of disrespect, towards the Turkish justice mechanism.

Furthermore, Germany was seen to give asylum to certain perpetrators of the July 15 coup attempt and allow activities of PKK and DHKP-C, which are supposedly outlawed in Germany. There is a possibility that this behavior aims to pressure the Turkish government whose policies have been subject to complaints by European counterparts in recent years. Another possible aim could be to prevent these terrorist organizations from committing terrorist acts in Germany by making certain concessions.

According to news reports, Michael Roth, a Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, in an interview to *Die Welt*, said that Germany was in solidarity with people persecuted and threatened by the current government in Turkey, and that these people can apply for asylum in Germany.¹⁹

Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu has harshly criticized Germany for allowing the activities of the PKK and DHKP-C.²⁰ Indicating that

17 Lütem, "Facts and Comments", Issue 32, p. 71-72.

18 "Almanya Cumhurbaşkanı Gauck, Can Dündar ile görüştü", *Hürriyet*, 07.12.2016.

19 "L'Allemagne Prête à Offrir l'Asile aux Personnes Persécutées en Turquie", *Armenews*, 10.11.2016.

20 "Turkish Foreign Minister Lashes Out at Germany over PKK", *Yeni Şafak*, 08.11.2016.

it is not a coincidence that the DHKP-C and PKK are carrying out activities predominantly in Germany, Çavuşoğlu pointed out that Turkey was sustaining bilateral relations with Germany despite a large number of FETÖ terrorists having gone (and welcomed) to Germany following the July 15 coup attempt. Stating that Germany was seeing itself as a first class country and a first class democracy, and Turkey as second class, Çavuşoğlu emphasized that Turkey wanted to be treated fairly as an equal partner.

Çavuşoğlu, probably referring to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs' request to visit Turkey, indicated that that German officials should learn to wait for when the Ankara officials have the available time.

Meanwhile, the German Press also has, for all intents and purposes, launched a smear campaign against Turkey. We will only mention *Der Spiegel's* 13 September 2016 issue, which can also be described as Special Issue on Turkey. In order to describe the content of this issue, we will use Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Tanju Bilgiç's statement in response to a question regarding this issue. The statement is as follows:

QA-33, 14 September 2016, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Tanju Bilgiç, in Response to a Question Regarding the "Turkey Special Issue" dated 13 September 2016 of "Der Spiegel", a Magazine Published in Germany

The image of Turkey that was tried to be created by the special issue on Turkey dated 13 September 2016 of "Der Spiegel", a magazine published in Germany, constitutes a new manifestation of the distorted and biased mindset of some media organs in Europe, which aim to damage the public image of Turkey for a long time. The fact that the cover of the aforementioned special issue is extremely provocative and creates negative perceptions about not only Turkey, but also Islam, captures our attention. The use of "A country loses its freedom" sub-heading on the cover reveals the intention to ignore insistently the heroic struggle of Turkish people at the cost of their lives, for democracy, freedom and the rule of law, on the 15th of July during the heinous coup attempt of Fetullahist Terrorist Organization (FETÖ), and to distort the facts intentionally.

Likewise, we condemn the efforts to defame by using various definitions the President of the Republic of Turkey, who is democratically elected with the overwhelming support of Turkish people.

Depiction of minarets as fired missiles on the cover of the magazine published during the Eid al-Adha holy to Islamic world indicates that a media organ, that claims respectability, may pursue a policy of publication far from responsibility, when it comes to islamophobia, xenophobia and discrimination, and may not hesitate to offend not only the Turkish community in Germany, who do not get involved in radical movements and contribute to the economic, social and cultural progress of the country in a peaceful manner, but also the Islamic world in general, and to associate them with the culture of violence is a clear and latest example of a mainly circulation oriented magazine and its anti-Turkey approach.

Despite all the efforts of the circles, who lack common sense and are guided by distorted mindset, Turkey will continue its legitimate struggle resolutely against terrorism, extremism and all forms of discrimination, in line with the rule of law and its international obligations, will always give the answer to the anti-Turkey circles they deserve and will continue to defend its constitutional order, democratic institutions and the rule of law. We call on the media organizations and the circles affecting the formation of public opinion in other countries and first and foremost in our allies and friends, to respect those principles that form the basis of the democratic world, to put an end to the ill-intended and desperately repetitive efforts aiming to insert a negative perception of Turkey into the memory of European public by remaining under the influence of racist, xenophobic and anti-Turkey movements, which are recently on the rise across Europe.

Der Spiegel is the most influential political magazine in Germany. It generally reflects the opinions of leftwing circles, and has made a practice of criticizing Turkey in every opportunity. The above-mentioned issue of *Der Spiegel* virtually broke records in this regard. When analyzed closely, it is seen that criticisms in the issue stem from anti-Turkish, anti-Turkey and Islamophobic sentiments, which are on the rise in Germany, rather than from human rights issues and the safeguard of democracy. Moreover, the issue does not take into account numerous problems, such as discrimination, faced by the Turkish community in Germany. It is also possible that the main purpose is to completely hinder Turkey's membership to the EU, which already reached an impasse.

Yet, it is also seen that Germany pursues a policy of détente with Turkey due to concerns over the cancellation of the permission for Germany to deploy warplanes in İncirlik, and to ensure that German lawmakers be allowed to visit

İncirlik. Turkey responded with the request that a statement playing down the German Federal Assembly's resolution on the Armenian genocide allegations be made by the German government.

It is understood from news reports that this request troubled Germany and that even the possibility of moving German planes to another country was considered.²¹ Ultimately, Germany decided to make such a statement. According to a statement by government spokesman Steffen Seibert on 2 September 2016, the German Federal Assembly's resolution is non-binding and is a political declaration, not a legal document.

Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel attempted to prevent criticisms directed at her from the Germany Parliament and the public by stating that she did not reject the Parliament's resolution in its essence.²²

That the resolution is (legally) non-binding and is not a legal document but a political declaration are actually known facts. However, following this statement, it was seen that numerous German MPs, who thought they won a victory against Turkey, were disappointed to learn that the resolution was legally worthless.

Another problematic incident between Turkey and Germany was the intended performance of the piece titled "Aghet" (En. Mourning) in Turkey in November following its prior performance in Germany in April. "Aghet" is reported to be composed by Marc Sinan, who is introduced as a composer of German, Turkish, and Armenian origin, and be about the Armenian genocide allegations.²³ In April, Turkey withdrew from the "Creative Europe" program which funded the musical project regarding "Aghet" due to the piece's anti-Turkish and anti-Turkey content.

Under normal conditions, "Aghet" should not have been performed in Turkey. Yet, it was learned that the Dresden Symphony Orchestra was scheduled to perform the piece on 13 November in Germany's Consulate-General in Istanbul. Furthermore, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım, Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu, and Minister of Culture Nabi Avcı were invited to the concert. What is important here is the fact that although it is well-known that the Turkish government rejects the Armenian genocide

21 "Ankara Veut Que Berlin Se Dissocie da la Décision du Parlement Sur La Génocide des Arméniens", *Armenews*, 30.08.2016.

22 "Germany Says Armenia Genocide Resolution 'Non-Ninding' after Reports Berlin Keen to 'Satisfy' Turkey", *RT*, 02.09.2016.

23 "Türkiye ve Almanya Arasında Yeni Bir Kriz Daha Kapıda", *Sputniknews*, 14.10.2016.

allegations and opposes “Aghet”, top government officials were invited to the concert as if in an attempt to teach them a lesson. Furthermore, it appears that it was planned that Turkey would cancel the concert, that this cancellation would be declared by the German press as an act against democracy, and that thus a smear campaign against Turkey would be initiated. However, things did not go as planned; the German Ministry of Foreign, realizing that such a concert within the property of the German government would cause another crisis in Turkey-Germany relations, decided to call off the concert. It is understood that the concert will be held in Armenia instead.²⁴

Germany is known as a country that attaches special importance to freedom of expression. While this is generally true, it is also seen that the freedom of expression is limited at times in cases which is not in accordance with the policies of Germany or states. We can show the below an incident that is a good example for this.

In order to protest against the July 15 coup attempt, some Turks in Germany organized a rally in Cologne on 31 July 2016 titled “Democracy Rally against Coup” with the participation of more than 30,000 people. President Erdoğan was planned to address the participants via video conference during the rally. However, upon local security authorities’ appeal, the German Federal Constitutional Court took a decision banning President Erdoğan’s address. Upon this unprecedented move by the German authorities, Presidential Spokesperson İbrahim Kalın made the following statement:

It is unacceptable that authorities which had remained silent in past to the acts and demonstrations of the separatist terrorist organization are now working to bring under suspicion and block an anti-coup rally with such an excuse that “acts of violence might break out”. Security precautions should not be taken against those who organize a democratic meeting, but against terror supporters and anti-democratic provocateurs.²⁵

Ultimately, President Erdoğan’s message was read out during the rally and no violence erupted.

Germany also seems to interpret freedom of expression and hand out legal punishment for its abuse in contradictory ways. Two incidents can be shown as good examples for this.

24 “İstanbul’da İptal Edilen Konser Ermenistan’da Yapılacak”, *Ermenihaber.am*, 08.11.2016.

25 “Statement by Presidential Spokesperson Ambassador İbrahim Kalın on “Democracy Rally against Coup” in Cologne”, *Presidency of the Republic of Turkey*, 31.07.2016.

Two Turks in Germany were handed fines of 600 and 700 euros by a Berlin court for insulting German Parliament deputies Sevim Dağdelen and Cem Özdemir (the architect of the German Federal Assembly's latest recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations) via the Internet.²⁶ It should be noted that both of these MPs subscribe to the Armenian genocide allegations and are proponents of the anti-Turkey politics prevalent in Germany.

Meanwhile, on 31 March 2016, German comedian Jan Böhmermann read a poem during a TV program on the channel ZDF insulting President of Turkey Erdoğan. When analyzed, it becomes apparent that Böhmermann's poem's sole purpose was to insult President Erdoğan in the crudest fashion possible. In response, Turkey sent a diplomatic note to Germany requesting the criminal prosecution of Böhmermann in accordance with Article 103 of the German Penal Code that criminalizes insults against foreign heads of state. Following the German government's approval of the request, Mainz Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation into Böhmermann, but later ruled non-prosecution on Böhmermann on 4 October. Furthermore, the objection made by Erdoğan's attorney against the verdict of non-prosecution was rejected on 14 October by the Koblenz Prosecutor's Office.²⁷ It should be reminded to the reader that Turkey and its President are subjected to constant criticisms and demeaning comments in German media and politics.

As it is seen, in Germany, freedom of expression and the punishment for its abuse is implemented in a way deemed suitable by the authorities; a Turkish president is prevented from making a speech in a peaceful rally, while people who insult German MPs are handed fines, but a verdict of non-prosecution can be given even though insults against foreign heads of state is subject to punishment according to German law.

As it is seen, in Germany, freedom of expression and the punishment for its abuse is implemented in a way that is deemed suitable by the authorities; a Turkish president is prevented from making a speech in a peaceful rally, while people who insult German MPs are handed fines, but a verdict of non-prosecution can be given even though insults against foreign heads of state is subject to punishment according to German law.

As mentioned above, the main reason behind this attitude towards Turkey and its officials is, no doubt, Turcophobia and Islamophobia that have been on the

26 "Milletvekillerine Karşı Nefret Mesajına Ceza", Deutsche Welle Türkçe, 03.11.2016.

27 "Başsavcılık Erdoğan'ın İtirazını Reddetti", Deutsche Welle Türkçe, 14.10.2016.

rise in Germany in recent years. However, causing Merkel's CDU/CSU faction to lose votes in the upcoming election in Germany may also be a reason.

Turcophobia in Germany has led the country to lose a significant amount of prestige in Turkey. Turkey is an important strategic partner for Germany, and economic relations between the two countries are at a high level. Therefore, the rising anti-German sentiments in Turkey would produce negative results for Germany.

The tension between the two countries has also shown a tendency to spread. On 7 December 2016, Ayşenur Bahçekapılı, the Deputy Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, was detained by the German police at the Cologne airport for investigation after she was prohibited from traveling with a temporary passport she received from the Turkish consulate in Germany after her bag and diplomatic passport were stolen in Cologne.²⁸

This incident drew strong reaction from President Erdoğan. Addressing Germany in a speech, President Erdoğan said: *"You take and host terrorists in your country, but you make the Deputy Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey and her delegation wait for hours at the door. Shouldn't we do the same to them?"*²⁹

According to news reports,³⁰ a similar implementation was launched in Turkey against German diplomats on the same day, and German diplomats leaving the country were held for investigation at airports for approximately two hours.

Probably to ease this tension between the two countries which shows a tendency to increase, and also to repair Germany's deteriorating image in Turkey, Chancellor Merkel became the first foreign statesperson to express her condolences to President Erdoğan over the bombing in Istanbul by the PKK on 10 December 2016 that claimed the lives of 38 people.³¹

2.3- France

We have mentioned in previous issues about efforts of Armenians in France, supported by President of France François Hollande itself, for the adoption of a law that criminalizes the rejection of the Armenian genocide allegations.³²

28 "Alman Polisinden Skandal 'Bahçekapılı' Açıklaması", *Hürriyet*, 07.12.2016.

29 "Türkiye Misliyle Mukabele Eder", *Hürriyet*, 08.12.2016.

30 "4 Alman Diplomat Yapılan Uygulama Sonrası Uçağı Kaçırıldı", *A Haber*, 08.12.2016.

31 "Angela Merkel'den Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan'a Taziye Telefonu", *Habertürk*, 11.12.2016.

32 Lütem, "Facts and Comments", Issue 33, p. 31-33.

The greatest obstacle to the adoption of such a law is the several verdicts by the Constitutional Council of France. As it is known, in 2012, a similar law was annulled by the Constitutional Council on the grounds that it violated the freedom of expression. Furthermore, in its verdict dated 8 January 2016 regarding a case not related to the Armenian question, the Constitutional Council confirmed that only a competent tribunal may decide whether an event or act constitutes genocide. Following this latest decision by the Council, the recognition of the 1915 events, which lacks such decision by such court, as genocide and the penalization of genocide “denial” became even more difficult.

Furthermore, in France, unlike the Jewish Holocaust, there is no need for a law as mentioned above as there is virtually no one that systematically denies, minimizes or trivializes the Armenian genocide allegations. French Armenians’ insistence on this issue derives from their desire to preserve the Armenian identity, which they have been losing due to assimilation, for a little while longer through the adoption of such a law, and to add another problem to the already turbulent relations between France and Turkey.

Finally, a bill drafted with the help of former President of the European Court of Human Rights, Jean-Paul Costa, who was appointed for the task by President Hollande, was submitted to the French National Assembly. On 27 June 2016, the bill was unanimously approved in the National Assembly in a session with very limited participation (only 21 MPs out of more than 500 MPs).

The bill speaks of genocides broadly and does not mention of the “Armenian genocide”. Therefore, there will be a need for an official legal characterization of the 1915 events as genocide, and for this, a competent national or international court decision is needed. However, there is no such decision with regard to the 1915 events.

The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which has closely followed the process in France, issued a statement on 6 July 2016, and indicated that the bill has the potential to pose the risk of limiting the freedom of expression in the event that it is enacted in its present form.³³

French Armenians have reacted differently to the adoption of the bill by the National Assembly. The Coordination Council of Armenian Organizations of France (Fr. *Conseil de Coordination des Organisations Arméniennes de France* - CCAF), which has closely followed the developments regarding the bill and maintained contacts with President Holland during this process, stated that the

33 Lütem, “Facts and Comments”, Issue 33, p. 36-37.

adoption of the bill was in accordance with promises made by President Hollande.³⁴ On the other hand, *Collectif Van*, which is a news agency popular among Armenians in France, expressed its disappointment with the bill, indicating that it is not the expected bill after four years that was mentioned in President Hollande's and the French Government's ostentatious statements.³⁵ Ara Toranian, the administrator of the *Nouvelles d'Arménie*, a monthly magazine published in France, and former spokesman for ASALA, also wrote that this bill offered less protection to the victims of the "Armenian genocide" compared to the victims of the Holocaust and the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica.³⁶ However, it should be noted that the difference between the Jewish, Rwandan, Bosnian genocides and the Armenian relocation is the fact that the latter has not been recognized as genocide by a competent court.

In order for the bill to be enacted, it must also be adopted by the French Senate. Initially, the bill's "punishment" section was cancelled by a special commission established within the Senate as it brought nothing new to the French criminal legislation and contained ambiguous elements incompatible with the criminal law.³⁷ However, these considerations were disregarded and the bill was ultimately approved with several modifications during the French Senate Plenary Session dated 14 October 2016 with 156 votes in favor of it and 146 against it.³⁸

In response to a question regarding the bill, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey made the following statement:

QA-38, 15 October 2016, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tanju Bilgiç, in Response to a Question Regarding the Amendment Proposal to the Law on the Freedom of Press Discussed in the French Senate

The amendment proposal to the Law on the Freedom of Press, which was adopted on 6 July 2016 by the French National Assembly concerning the criminalization of the denial of war crime, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide under certain conditions, was

34 "Soutien au Oroj de Loi Pénalisant le Négationnisme", *CCAF*, 29.06.2016.

35 "Loi Anti-Négationniste: Le Changement c'est du Vent", *Collectif VAN*, 29.06.2016.

36 Ara Toranian, "Pénalisation du Négationnisme du Génocide Arménien: Le Retour", *La Règle Du Jeu*, 04.07.2016.

37 "A Senate Committee Delays the Article on the Criminalization of Holocaust Denial", *Armenews*, 16.09.2016.

38 For detailed information on the justification and content of the draft law, see: Pulat Tacar, "Fransa'nın Soykırımı Suçunun İnkârını Cezalandırma Yasasının Gerekçesine Yüklenen Virüs", *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Issue 55.

withdrawn from the Draft by the Special Commission established within the French Senate in September as it contradicts with the legislation method. However, the said amendment proposal was reintroduced into the Draft during the French Senate Plenary Session dated 14 October 2016 with 156 votes in favour to 146 against.

This recent regulation, in contrast to the claims of some circles, does not contain any reference to the events of 1915. Moreover, the events of 1915 is a legitimate matter of debate under the protection of freedom of expression, according to the caselaw of the European Court of Human Rights. Likewise, it is recalled that a denial law, which was previously adopted in France concerning the events of 1915, was subsequently revoked by the French Constitutional Council in 2012 as it contradicts with the freedom of expression and does not comply with legislative power of parliaments.

On the other hand, the recent regulation, which was considered against the legislation method by the Special Commission within the French Senate since it brings nothing new to the French criminal legislation and contains ambiguous elements incompatible with criminal law, has the potential to pose the risk of unlawful restriction of the freedom of expression.

The fact that this recent regulation, which is problematic with respect to the law and the freedom of expression, is set forth just prior to the upcoming elections to be held in 2017 in France, demonstrates that it is dealt with domestic political motives rather than legal considerations. It also reveals that the political gains to be earned in the elections are prioritized over the law and universal values.

We will closely follow the upcoming processes in the near future, regarding the said regulation which has not yet been enacted.

Because the bill from the National Assembly was approved by the Senate with modifications, the bill had to be voted again in the National Assembly, in which the bill was first introduced, after a final agreement on the text of the bill by a committee consisting of members from the Senate and the National Assembly. Ultimately, the modified bill was adopted by the National Assembly on 23 December.³⁹ The bill will be enacted after it is signed by the President.

³⁹ "Fransa'da Şok: 'Ermeni Soykırımı' Yoktur Diyenlere Hapis ve Para Cezasının Önü Açıldı", *Artı 33*, 23.12.2016, <https://www.arti33.com/2016/12/23/fransada-sok-fransada-sok-ermeni-soykirimi-yoktur-diyenlere-hapis-ve-para-cezasinin-onu-acildi/>

However, 60 MPs or senators have the right to refer the bill to the French Constitutional Council on the grounds that it is unconstitutional.

Ultimately, despite all efforts and the President's support, a law like the one requested by the Armenians that envisages one year imprisonment and a 40,000 Euro fine for no reason other than rejecting the "Armenian genocide" is yet to be adopted, and the uncertainty on whether the newly adopted law covers the Armenian genocide allegations still continues.

Below is the statement regarding the newly adopted law by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs that closely follows this issue:

QA-48, 23 December 2016, Statement of the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Hüseyin Müftüoğlu, in Response to a Question Regarding the Amendment to the Law on the Freedom of Press Adopted in the French Parliament

The legal amendment for broadening the scope of the crime of genocide denial, which has been adopted at the French Parliament, has the potential to pose the risk of unlawful restriction of the freedom of expression as pointed out in our previous statements. Furthermore, several French parliamentarians and jurists are of the opinion that this amendment contradicts with the legislation method as it brings nothing new to the French criminal legislation and contains ambiguous elements incompatible with criminal law. The fact that significant number of parliamentarians voted against the amendment and its adoption by a narrow margin demonstrate the lack of consensus on the issue.

We will closely follow processes in the upcoming period regarding the amendment, which has not yet been enacted.

2.4- Italy

In 2000, the Italian Parliament recognized the Armenian genocide allegations by referring to the European Parliament's resolution dated 1987 on the same issue. However, Italian governments have been careful not to touch upon the Armenian genocide allegations unless deemed necessary, and thus have tried to avoid this issue becoming a problem with Turkey. Yet, several regional parliaments and city councils in Italy have adopted resolutions recognizing these allegations.

Visiting Armenia in November, Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs Paolo Gentiloni, in response to a journalist's question on the Armenian allegations, said:

Italy has always recognized the extraordinary gravity of the bloody events and acts committed against the Armenian people. However, we believe that the discussions on the legal definition of the term "genocide" should be left to international organizations and should not cause further tension in the region.⁴⁰

Thus, Gentiloni once again revealed Italy's desire to not interfere in this issue.

2.5- Israel

For years, a group within the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) has always labored for the recognition of the Armenian genocide allegations. Although the support for this group has increased following the "Mavi Marmara" incident, they have failed in their quest due to failing to have the support of the Israeli government.

The Israeli government, on the other hand, even when relations with Turkey were most strained, has never considered recognized the Armenian genocide allegations, and thus has acted in an astute manner such as to not add a new problem to relations. However, it was observed that the number of people regarding the 1915 events as "genocide" in and out of the parliament have increased. Contrary to the former President of Israel Shimon Peres, the current President Reuven Rivlin has long supported the Armenian genocide hypothesis. The Speaker of the Knesset Yuli Edelstein's stance on the issue has also been the same. Meretz Party leader Zahava Gal-On has long been an active supporter of the Armenian allegations. In short, although it seems that the majority of Knesset members support the Armenian views, no resolution recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations has been adopted due to lack of government support.

In the face of the difficulty of having a resolution adopted in the parliament, supporters of the Armenian views secured a decision from the Parliament's Education, Culture and Sports Committee on 1 August 2016 recognizing the Armenian genocide allegations and calling the government to do so as well.⁴¹ Since this decision does not bind either the Knesset or the government, it will have no legal and/or political consequences.

40 "İtalya'dan 1915 Açıklaması", *DHA*, 25.11.2016,

41 "Knesset Education Committee Recognizes Armenian Genocide", *The Times of Israel*, 01.08.2016.

On the other hand, since Turkey-Israel relations have returned to normal and both countries have reappointed ambassadors, the possibility of a resolution regarding the genocide allegations are now slim.

2.6- Egypt

After the deterioration of Turkey-Egypt relations following El-Sisi's coup in Egypt, several articles in favor of the Armenian genocide allegations have appeared in the Egyptian press.⁴²

There is no question that the fate of this motion lies on the future of Turkey-Egypt relations. In case there is no improvement in relations, there is a possibility that the motion to be adopted. On the other hand, if relations improve as expected, there is a chance that the motion be shelved.

President El-Sisi, like other head of states, was invited to join the 24 April 2015 ceremonies,⁴³ but did not accept the invitation. On the other hand, a group of Egyptian Armenians and other Christians went to Yerevan for the ceremonies.⁴⁴

At the end of July 2016, an Egyptian MP by the name of Mustafa Bekri, who was probably under the influence of Egyptian Armenians, submitted a motion that carried the signatures of 337 MPs and asked the Armenian genocide allegations be recognized. Since the absolute majority in the Egyptian Parliament is 298, in the event that the motion is voted and is not opposed by the government, the motion should be adopted.

There is no question that the fate of this motion lies on the future of Turkey-Egypt relations. In case there is no improvement in relations, there is a possibility that the motion to be adopted. On the other hand, if relations improve as expected, there is a chance that the motion be shelved. President El-Sisi's words in his statement on 22 August that "*there is no reason for animosity with Turks*"⁴⁵ can be regarded as the sign of normalizing relations between the two countries.

42 Ahmed Magdy Al-Soukkary, "Between Recognition and Denial - the Genocide Question and Turkish-Armenian Relations", *Transconflict*, 06.01.2014; "Erdogan Tries to Ignore Genocide", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 23.04.2015; "A Date with International Recognition", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 16.04.2016.

43 "Egypt's Sisi Invited to Attend 'Anti-Turkey Genocide Celebrations'", *MENA News Agency*, 19.03.2015.

44 "Forget Me Not", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 23.04.2015; "Egypt Sends Delegation for Armenian Genocide Centennial", *Ahram Online*, 19.04.2015.

45 "Türklerle Düşmanlık Gerektirecek Durum Yok", *Hürriyet*, 22.08.2016.

2.7- Lebanon

In Lebanon (established on the principle of protecting religious communities), since the Armenian community is represented in the parliament and government, there is possibility that the Armenian genocide allegations are brought up. Lebanese Christians, in principle, also appear to have embraced the genocide allegations. In fact, for this reason, the Lebanese Parliament adopted two resolutions, one in 1997 and another in 2000, that recognized the genocide allegations.

Furthermore, it is observed that several Lebanese politicians have turned the Armenian genocide allegations into a personal issue. For instance, Minister of Culture of Lebanon Roni Arayji, in his speech at a meeting organized by Armenian on 10 May 2016, said that it was the same violence that prevailed in Armenia and Lebanon during the First World War which is now manifested in Syria and Iraq. He further stated that the Armenian people want to be recognized as the victim (the aggrieved party), but Turkey today persists in denying this historical fact and is hiding behind mitigating circumstances to avoid paying compensation for moral and material damages. He also added that there are no extenuating circumstances to justify genocide.⁴⁶

There is no need to say that these are Minister of Culture Arayji's personal opinions and they do not bind the Lebanese government.

Arayji was not included in the Saad Hariri's government that was formed on 19 December 2016.

2.8- Syria

Like many other countries, Syria's approach towards the Armenian genocide allegations is contingent upon its relations with Turkey. When relations have been normal or good, Syria has remained silent on the genocide allegations despite the Armenian population of 100,000 in Syria who are the grandchildren of those subjected to relocation and therefore, are known for their anti-Turkey sentiments.⁴⁷ However, following the deterioration of relations with Turkey, President Al-Assad told that the current clashes in Syria reminded "*the*

46 "Le Génocide Arménien: Histoire et Droits de L'Homme", *L'Orient le Jour*, 12.05.2016.

47 According to a source dated March 2016, the remaining Armenian population in Syria is 23,000 (*ermenihaber.am*, 10 March 2016). Certainly, the population of Armenians has decreased following the destructive clashes in Aleppo, a city inhabited by the majority of the Armenian population in Syria, that took place in December 2016.

massacres perpetrated by the Ottomans against the Armenians when they killed a million and a half Armenians and half a million Assyrians."⁴⁸

During his speech in 2015 on the Martyrs Day on May 6, President Al-Assad stated that the Ottoman Empire executed Syrian patriots, and also massacred millions of Armenians, Assyrians and members of other groups.⁴⁹

Despite mutual visits between Syria and Armenia, and news that the Syrian Parliament will recognize the "Armenian genocide", there have been no such recognition. Along with concerns to not add a new unnecessary problem to the already tense Turkey-Syrian relations, this might be due to the Syrian Parliament dealing with more urgent matters than the genocide allegations such as the civil war.

3- THE KARABAKH ISSUE

In this section, we will analyze the Nagorno-Karabakh issue under two headings, namely, the latest developments and Turkey's contribution to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict.

3.1- Latest Developments

Although the Minsk Group Co-Chairs (US, France, Russia), for more than 20 years have devised several proposals for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, no progress has been achieved due to opposition from Armenia. As for why Armenia does not want a solution; in Armenia, in which ultra-nationalistic sentiments and views dominate, there are still dreams of realizing "Great Armenia" and therefore, it is commonly believed that Karabakh is Armenian territory. Armenians are aware of the fact that Azerbaijan will not easily give up its rights to Karabakh with the support of Turkey and other Muslim-majority countries. However, based on the view that Karabakh - although unrecognized- is a "state", Armenians have been in the struggle for sustaining this "state", legalizing this de facto situation, in other words, maintaining the status quo in Karabakh.

The governments of the Co-Chairs, which have been close to Armenians for various reasons, seem to be not complaining about the continuation of the conflict. However, a small-scale war broke out in Karabakh in April, in which

48 "Syrian President Finally Recognizes the Armenian Genocide", *Asbarez*, 28.01.2014.

49 "Bashar al-Assad Mentions Genocide in his Martyrs Day Address", *Armenpress*, 07.05.2015.

Azerbaijan got the edge over Armenia. This development eventually concerned Russia, the only “de facto” major power in the region, leading to a ceasefire. However, Russia, knowing this ceasefire will not be long-lasting, began to work towards a permanent settlement. The latest formula to this end is the complete or partial return of seven occupied rayons (districts) surrounding Karabakh to Azerbaijan and then, the determination of Karabakh’s status. However, Armenia wants the status of the Karabakh region to be determined through a referendum on a pre-determined date. It also wants confidence building measures to be implemented, or in other words, wants to prevent a new war in Karabakh.

Russia has become somewhat of an arbitrator in the settlement process of the Karabakh conflict following Russia’s role in ending the war in April. Russia organized meetings with between Azerbaijan and Armenia in which President of Russia Vladimir Putin himself participated. During the meeting in Vienna and St. Petersburg, according to news reports,⁵⁰ the following stages for resolution were discussed: First, five districts currently under Armenian occupation will be evacuated and returned to Azerbaijani control. Then, two more districts will be evacuated. A corridor connecting Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh will be defined. Finally, the status of Nagorno-Karabakh will be decided upon.

Despite Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov’s optimistic statements after the meetings between the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan that the settlement of the Karabakh conflict was closer, Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Shavarsh Kocharyan indicated that the status of Karabakh will be determined by the people of Karabakh, which is mostly Armenian, via a referendum. These statements reveal that Armenia tries to guarantee a referendum that will be participated by a predominantly Armenian population to determine the status of Karabakh.

On the other hand, Azerbaijan, while maintaining that the Armenian people of Karabakh be given as extensive rights as possible, insists that the Karabakh region should remain part of Azerbaijan as in the Soviet Union period. President of Azerbaijan İlham Aliyev, in his interview with the Russian *Ria Novosti* TV channel, made a new important proposal and stated that Karabakh can become an “autonomous republic” within Azerbaijan, while emphasizing that they will never accept an independent Karabakh. Although this means a partial softening of Azerbaijan’s stance, which up until now had always maintained that it did not favor the establishment of a second Armenian state,

50 “Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan Dağlık Karabağ için Anlaştı”, *Milliyet*, 22.06.2016.

Azerbaijan maintains its core position as it proposes autonomy to Karabakh within Azerbaijan and not independence.

Armenians, on the other hand, expressed their desire for the increase of confidence building measures between Azerbaijan and Armenia and for the implementation of the decisions taken during the meetings in Vienna and St. Petersburg. These decisions are, in a nutshell, the employment of more observers and more cooperation with regards to missing persons.⁵¹

The CIS (Community of Independent States) summit in Bishkek on 16 September 2016 created an opportunity for President Aliyev and President Sargsyan to come together. CIS, in principle, is not responsible for the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. However, in his statement, President Sargsyan, touching upon the Karabakh conflict, stated that Armenia was for the resolution of the conflict on the basis of international law, norms, and reasonable mutual compromises⁵² and that progress with regard to the Karabakh conflict was contingent on the implementation of confidence-building measures.⁵³ As it is known, these measures are the international monitoring of cease-fire violations and increasing the number of observers in the Karabakh region.

Sargsyan also stated that Armenia's attitude is in line with the attitude of the Minsk Group Co-Chairs. It is not clear what this attitude is. However, it is understood that it is the return of seven Azerbaijani rayons (districts) surrounding Karabakh to Azerbaijan and in turn, the determination of the status of Karabakh with a referendum. Since there no Azerbaijanis in Karabakh and that they will still be in minority even if those who were forced to migrate returned to Karabakh, the result of such referendum is clear. This formula, which can be summarized as "Karabakh's independence in exchange for the return of Azerbaijani rayons", is actually pretty old and has been rejected by Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's only compromise on the matter is, as mentioned above, Karabakh taking the name of "Armenian Republic" but within Azerbaijan with great autonomy.

At the same meeting, President Sargsyan, touching upon the April clashes in Karabakh, also claimed that Azerbaijan had violated the ceasefire signed in Bishkek in 1994.

51 "Joint Statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Secretary of State of the United States of America and State Secretary for Europe Affairs of France", *OSCE*, 16.05.2016.

52 "L'Arménie Est Prête à Un Compromis Raisonnable avec l'Azerbaïdjan, Selon S. Sarkissian", *Armenews*, 18.09.2016.

53 "Armenia Committed to 'Reasonable Compromise' on Karabakh, Says Sarkisian", *RFE/RL*, 16.09.2016.

In response to Sargsyan,⁵⁴ President Aliyev stated that Armenia occupied the territories of a sovereign state (Azerbaijan), violated its territorial integrity, and expelled local Azerbaijani population from Karabakh and seven surrounding districts, making more than one million people refugees. He further stated that Armenia has vandalized or destroyed everything in the occupied lands, including historical, religious, cultural monuments, which was evidenced by the reports of two OSCE missions. Aliyev indicated that Armenia has pretended to engage in the negotiations process for more than 20 years in an effort to maintain the status quo.

Pointing out that the United Nations Security Council adopted four resolutions in early 1990s that demanded the unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the occupant Armenian forces from Azerbaijan's territory, President Aliyev indicated that none of these resolutions were fulfilled. He also pointed out that Armenia also was making administrative changes in Karabakh and that these were illegal and a crime. Indicating that Armenian was misusing the Minsk Group format to make the negotiations continue forever and that it did not want peace, Aliyev stated that Armenia's sole purpose was to keep Azerbaijani territories under control. Mentioning that Azerbaijan did not occupy anybody's territory, he emphasized that it is 20% of Azerbaijan's internationally-recognized territory that has been under occupation, and stated that he deemed it his duty to bring these to attention with reference to the Armenian President's inappropriate complaint (cease-fire violations).

This event shows that the public's notion about important steps having been taken with regard to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict as a result of Putin's meetings with Aliyev and Sargsyan following the clashes in Karabakh in April is not correct, and that no progress has been made towards a settlement for more than twenty years. To summarize, while Azerbaijan, in accordance with international law, wants the return of its territories, Armenia avoids doing this.

While Sargsyan stated that "It makes no sense to respond to such lies" in reaction to Aliyev's statements, Aliyev ended the discussion by saying "I have already responded to a lie."

This event shows that the public's notion about important steps having been taken with regard to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict as a result of Putin's meetings with Aliyev and Sargsyan following the clashes in Karabakh

54 "Ilham Aliyev's Solid, Tough Response to Armenian President's Provocative Remarks", *Trend News Agency*, 17.09.2016.

in April is not correct, and that no progress has been made towards a settlement for more than twenty years. To summarize, while Azerbaijan, in accordance with international law, wants the return of its territories, Armenia avoids doing this.

Armenia's uncompromising attitude has led the settlement of the Karabakh conflict to an impasse. Following the clashes in April, US Secretary of State John Kerry, together with Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, had made efforts for a resolution in Karabakh. In the face of recent developments, Kerry stated that no solution was in sight to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict because Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders were still not prepared for a compromise peace deal.⁵⁵ It is understood that Russia share the same opinion. President Putin's aide Yuri Ushakov stated that Russia was not optimistic about a solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, but will continue to work with Yerevan and Baku.⁵⁶

Eduard Sharmazanov, the Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia, pointed out that no progress is expected in the short-run by stating that no meeting is scheduled between Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents in near future.⁵⁷

On the other hand, Minsk Group Co-Chairs made efforts for the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers to meet during the annual OSCE Ministerial Council meeting to be held on 8-9 December 2016.⁵⁸ However, as predicted, the two ministers did not meet during the OSCE Ministerial Council. The main reason for this is the fact that Azerbaijan's and Armenia's views regarding Karabakh are totally different. Azerbaijan justifiably wants the evacuation of territories occupied by Armenia, including Karabakh. Azerbaijan is willing to accept granting extensive autonomy to Karabakh Armenians as a part of Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan also accepts Karabakh being called an "Armenian Autonomous Republic". Armenia, on the other hand, insist on Karabakh being an independent state and endeavors for the recognition of Karabakh's independence in return for the evacuation of seven Azerbaijani rayons.

In a joint statement issued after the Hamburg meeting,⁵⁹ Minsk Group Co-Chairs declared the Group's stance and items that will form the basis of the settlement.

55 "Armenian, Azeri Leaders 'Not Ready' for Compromise", *RFE/RL*, 30.09.2016.

56 "Putin's Aide: Moscow Not Optimistic About Karabakh Settlement", *APA.az*, 13.10.2016.

57 "Sharmazanov: Önümüzdeki Süreçte Ermenistan ve Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı Buluşması Gerçekleşmeyecek", *News.am*, 27.10.2016.

58 "Les Ministres Des Affaires Étrangères Arménien et Azéri S'Accusent Mutuellement", *Armenews*, 09.11.2016.

59 "OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair Countries Issue Statement on Karabakh", *Asbarez*, 08.12.2016.

In the statement, the Co-Chairs expressed their concerns “*over continuing armed incidents, including reports on the use of heavy weapons*”, and “*strongly condemned the use of force or the threat of the use of force, stating that there is no military solution to this conflict and no justification for the death and injury of civilians*”. Furthermore, the Co-Chairs appealed to the “*sides to confirm their commitment to the peaceful resolution of the conflict as the only way to bring real reconciliation to the peoples of the region, and urged them to adhere strictly to the 1994/95 ceasefire agreements that make up the foundation of the cessation of hostilities in the conflict zone.*” The Co-Chairs urged “*Baku and Yerevan to honor the agreements reflected in the Joint Statements of the 16 May Summit in Vienna and the 20 June Summit in St. Petersburg.*”

In the statement, the Minsk Group Co-Chairs reminded “*the sides that that the settlement must be based on the core principles of the Helsinki Final Act, namely: non-use of force, territorial integrity, and the equal rights and self-determination of peoples*”. The Co-Chairs also reminded the

...additional elements as proposed by the Presidents of the Co-Chair countries, including return of the territories surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijani control; an interim status for Nagorno-Karabakh providing guarantees for security and self-governance; a corridor linking Armenia to Nagorno-Karabakh; future determination of the final legal status of Nagorno-Karabakh through a legally binding expression of will; the right of all internally displaced persons and refugees to return to their former places of residence; and international security guarantees that would include a peacekeeping operation.

Finally, the Co-Chairs proposed a meeting between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia.

To sum up, although Russia’s initiative led to the cessation of clashes in Karabakh with a cease-fire agreement, it did not end the conflict between the two sides.

3.2- Turkey’s Contribution to the Settlement of the Karabakh Conflict

Before going into the details of this topic, there is benefit in explaining the reasons for Turkey’s interest in the Karabakh conflict. No doubt, the first reason is Turkey’s very close relations with Azerbaijan. Since the very beginning,

Turkey objects to the on-going occupation of Karabakh -a part of Azerbaijan according to international law- despite UN Security Council resolutions. The other reason is that the Karabakh conflict harms Turkey's interests due to it preventing peace and cooperation in the neighboring South Caucasus region, and leading to intervention from exterritorial countries.

Turkey has long wanted to play an active role in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. It is for this reason that it became a member of the Minsk Group. However, with the Minsk Group handing over its responsibilities to the United States, Russia and France (Co-Chairs), Turkey became unable to contribute to the process. Furthermore, Armenia has always opposed Turkey playing a role in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict on the grounds that it will not act impartial.

During his visit to Azerbaijan, on 15 July 2016, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu reiterated Turkey's support for the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict within the internationally recognized borders of Azerbaijan and its territorial integrity. He also added that the normalization of Turkey's relations with Russia will definitely help the settlement of the conflict.⁶⁰

Çavuşoğlu's statements were negatively received in Armenia. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia spokesman Tigran Balayan said that Armenia does not need Turkey's help in its relations with Azerbaijan, and indicated that Turkey should stay away from the issue if it wants to be helpful.⁶¹ That Turkey can help the settlement of the Karabakh conflict by staying away from it has become a saying that is frequently used by Armenian officials in recent times.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu also indicated that Turkey was cooperating with the countries of the region via trilateral mechanisms (i.e. Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia) and that an Azerbaijan-Turkey-Russia trilateral format was also possible as it would benefit the region.⁶²

Turkey-Russia relations, which were reduced to a minimal level after the downing of the Russian warplane, gradually returned to normal following talks between President Erdoğan and President Putin in Saint-Petersburg in early

60 "Dışişleri Bakanı Çavuşoğlu Azerbaycan'da", *Haberler.com*, 15.07.2016.

61 "Ermenistan Dışişleri Bakanlığı Sözcüsünden Çavuşoğlu'na Tepki: Türkiye Uzak Dursun", *Ermenihaber.am*, 26.07.2016.

62 "L'Arménie et L'Azerbaïdjan Plus Proches D'une Résolution Pacifiste D'Après La Russie", *Armenews*, 13.07.2016.

August. It is understood that the Karabakh conflict was discussed during these meetings. Speaking to journalists on his flight back to Turkey, President Erdoğan said that it was decided upon to create a trilateral mechanism between Turkey, Russia, and Azerbaijan for the purpose of following the developments in the region (the Caucasus). Also touching upon the Karabakh conflict, President Erdoğan said that different results could have been achieved with regard to this issue that remains unsettled for 23-24 years had Turkey been included in the Minsk Group process (or was among the Co-Chairs).⁶³

One day prior to these developments, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Çavuşoğlu said that Russia's proposals with regard to the Karabakh process were in accordance with Turkey's proposals, and touched upon a possible trilateral mechanism between Turkey, Russia, and Azerbaijan.⁶⁴

In an interview with *Trend News Agency* regarding the St. Petersburg talks, Turkish Presidential Spokesperson İbrahim Kalın told that the Azerbaijan-Turkey-Russia trilateral mechanism is an important step regarding relations between the three countries, as well as the settlement of the Karabakh conflict. Stating the Turkey saw President Putin's contacts with both Aliyev and Sargsyan as a positive development, Kalın said that the Armenia's withdrawal from occupied Azerbaijani territories would be for the better and would relieve tensions in the region. Furthermore, he added that the trilateral format will be beneficial for all parties. Kalın also indicated that Armenia will make the most from the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations, and that Armenians would benefit more in the medium and long terms if it looks through a strategic perspective, adding that the trilateral mechanism will also contribute to this process as well.⁶⁵

Russia's acknowledgment in the talks to normalize Turkey-Russia relations that Turkey can contribute to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict is an important development, because previously Russia, like Armenia, was against Turkey becoming involved with the Karabakh issue. However, the fact that Russia now disregards Armenia's stance is a significant development in terms of Russia-Armenia relations.

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63 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan: Dağlık Karabağ Sorununun Çözümünde Gelişmeler Var", *Trend Haber Ajansı*, 11.08.2016.

64 "Bakan Çavuşoğlu: Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu Azerbaycan-Türkiye-Rusya Üçlü Mekanizmasında Görüşülecek", *Trend Haber Ajansı*, 10.08.2016.

65 "Kalın: Rusya-Türkiye-Azerbaycan Mekanizması Karabağ Sorununun Çözüm Sürecine Katkı Sağlayacak", *Trend Haber Ajansı*, 10.08.2016.

important development, because previously Russia, like Armenia, was against Turkey becoming involved with the Karabakh issue. However, the fact that Russia now disregards Armenia's stance is a significant development in terms of Russia-Armenia relations.

However, it is difficult to say that Armenia agrees with this opinion regarding Turkey's contribution. Eduard Sharmazanov, the Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia, who appears to have been tasked with making statements against Turkey, reiterated that Armenia considers Turkey's involvement and mediation efforts on Karabakh unacceptable and justified this argument with the claim that Turkey is "*holding Armenia in a blockade and constantly encouraging Azerbaijan's illegal acts against the people of Nagorno Karabakh.*" He also claimed that during the meeting with Armenian President Sargsyan in Moscow, Russian President Putin said that Russia does not welcome Turkey's participation in the negotiation process.⁶⁶

In this period of impasse in the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Lavrov's statement on 14 October 2016 that Turkey can play positive role in the settlement drew attention.⁶⁷ The role Lavrov sees fit for Turkey is the lifting of the blockade of Nagorno-Karabakh and ensuring economic cooperation in the region. However, it is not clear how Turkey, which has no borders with Karabakh and has no trade with the region, will contribute to the lifting of the blockade. Lavrov also stated that Russia will welcome the implementation of the agreement between Turkey and Armenia (the Protocols) without reference to the Karabakh conflict, and that progress in the Karabakh settlement will be crucial for the normalization of Turkey-Armenia relations.

It is understood that Turkey is expected to contribute to the settlement of the Karabakh conflict without being a Minsk Group Co-Chair or having a similar status. However, it is not clear how this will be done. However, in our opinion, what is important is not how Turkey will contribute, but that Russia wants Turkey to contribute despite opposition from Armenia.

Armenia did not delay in its reaction in this instance as well. The Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson reiterated Armenia's opinion that Turkey should stay away from the Karabakh peace process. Hereby, despite all efforts, no progress was made towards the settlement of the Karabakh conflict and how Turkey will contribute to the process was not made clear.

66 "Sharmazanov: Turkey Has Nothing To Do In Karabakh Peace Process", *News.am*, 11.08.2016.

67 "Lavrov Believes Turkey Can Play Positive Role in Nagorno-Karabakh Settlement", *AzerTac*, 14.10.2016

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