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REVIEW OF  
**ARMENIAN STUDIES**  
A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations

Issue  
**46**  
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Armenians in Maraş and the Zeytun Rebellions

**Şevval Beste GÖKÇELİK**



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YAYINCILIK

## REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

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**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Murat KÖYLÜ** was born as the child of a family of Caucasian immigrants in the Bulanık district of Muş/Türkiye. He completed his primary and secondary education in İzmir due to his father's employment at the Municipality of İzmir. Entering the Turkish Military Academy in 1982, Köylü graduated from the Academy in 1986 at the top of his class as a Lieutenant. He subsequently enrolled at the following programs and institutions: the Faculty of Law of Dokuz Eylül University (1993), the Master's Degree Program of the Department of Management Organization at the Institute of Social Sciences of Selçuk University (2000), Turkish Military Academy (2001), the Master's Degree Program of the Department of Business at the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Atılım University (2001), and the Doctoral Program at the Graduate School of Principles of Atatürk and Turkish Revolution History of Dokuz Eylül University (2002). After voluntarily retiring from the Turkish Armed Forces in 2008 with the rank of Senior Colonel, Köylü served as an Assistant Professor at the Turkish-Kyrgyz University of Enterprise (Kyrgyzstan) between 2010-2011 and at the Toros University between 2012-2019. After becoming an Associate Professor in May 2020, Köylü began to serve at the Faculty of Law and Vocational School of Çağ University from August 2020 onwards. As a member of the Directorate of the Vocational School of Çağ University, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Köylü continues to teach undergraduate and associate degree courses in Law History, Political History, and Principles of Atatürk and Revolution History. To this date, he has published 19 books and 35 articles and papers on the topics of the History of the Turkish Republic, Political History, and Law History.



**Dr. Günel MUSAYEVA** completed her undergraduate and master's degree education on International Relations at the Azerbaijan University of Languages. Since 2017, she has been serving as the Manager of the Department of Scientific Translation, Publication and Public Relations at the Institute of Caucasus Studies of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS). On 18 March 2022, Musayeva successfully defended her doctoral dissertation on History titled "The Oil Factor in Great Britain's Azerbaijan Policy (1991-2013)". Dr. Musayeva currently pursues research on Armenia and Russia relations. She has so far published 32 articles, 14 of which were published internationally in Russia, Georgia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.





**A**s always, the first article in the 46th issue of our journal is “**Facts and Comments**”. This article covers the domestic and international developments of Armenia, the process for concluding the peace agreement with Azerbaijan following the 2020 Karabakh War, and Türkiye-Armenia relations in the period of June-November 2022. Two full years have elapsed since the end of the war and the cease-fire agreement signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Moscow with the participation of the Russian President. It is possible to explain this lapse with the efforts of Armenia using delaying tactics as it appeals to third states with own interests in the region, to minimize its losses and make some gains. There is an active resistance to the peace agreement initiatives of the government also by a radical-militant group in the Diaspora and an opposition in the country. The most serious challenge before the peace agreement is the issue of delimitation and demarcation of the borders as it would lead to the acknowledgement of Karabakh to be within the boundaries of Azerbaijan. In foreign policy, the efforts to shift to the West without drawing the ire of Russia is being carried out with the re-fashioned concept of multi-vector foreign policy. Relations with Türkiye are moving forward in a step-by-step approach within the process of normalization. On the other hand, the long-established anti-Turk and anti-Türkiye stand of Armenia does not seem to be restrained despite this process.

In his article titled “**Sultan Abdülhamit II’s Alleged Role in the 1909 Adana Events**”, Murat Köylü analyzes the circumstances surrounding the highly controversial Adana Events of 1909 that claimed the lives of many Ottoman Muslims and Armenians and the allegations that the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit II had orchestrated these events. To carry out such an analysis, he narrates the personality and deeds of Abdülhamit II, the formation of the Armenian national movement, the importance of Adana for the Armenian national cause, the events leading up to the flare up of the Adana events, the details of the events themselves, and the domestic and foreign reporting on these events. Based on the accounts of the kind of person Abdülhamit II was and the available evidence concerning the 1909 Adana Events, he argues that it is simply not possible to lay the sole blame of the events on Abdülhamit II, since a variety of factors had come together that led to the said events. Köylü adds that Armenian nationalists and Western media nevertheless blamed Abdülhamit II based on hearsay and exaggerated accounts, contributing to Abdülhamit II’s unwarranted notoriety in the Western world.



In her article titled “**Socio-Political Struggle Concerning the Russian Language in Armenia**”, Günel Musayeva evaluates Armenia’s state policies concerning the use of the Russian language in post-Soviet Armenia. She highlights that there is a stark contrast between Armenia’s official claims of adherence to democratic values and its harsh clampdown on the use of Russian in the public and private spaces of Armenia. She observes that the Armenian political elite view the Russian language as a threat to Armenia’s goal of national identity construction, even though Russian poses no true threat to an overwhelmingly mono-ethnic state like Armenia. She indicates that Armenia successfully evades a harsh reaction from its ally Russia in this regard, which traditionally serves as a guardian and promoter of the Russian language in the post-Soviet world. Musayeva argues that Armenia’s state policies concerning the use of the Russian language amounts to systematic marginalization that not only violates the rights of the Russian minority living in Armenia, but also deprives Armenians the chance to properly learn Russian that will be useful in pursuing educational and business activities in the post-Soviet world.

Our 46th issue also contains three book reviews.

The first review is by F. Jale Gül Çoruk on the book titled “**Adam and Eve in the Armenian Tradition, Fifth Through Seventeenth Centuries**”. The book is heavy on theology, but is important for those conducting research on Armenian studies because it reveals aspects of the historical trajectory of Armenian culture and Armenian’s conception on morality informed by their religious beliefs. The book also contains a useful biography section on many Armenian authors throughout history.

The second review is by İlknur Dişlioğlu on the book titled “**A Letter from Japan - Strategically Mum: The Silence of Armenians**”, a fascinating collection of letters by Iver Torikian, an Armenian American scholar living and working in Japan. Torikian gives an account of his family and life that stretches from Türkiye to the US and Japan, and expresses his frustration at the state of Turkish-Armenian relations. He argues that his own people and the Western world exclusively focus on the plight of the Armenians concerning controversial historical events to the detriment of the Turkish side, and that many Armenian authors writing about such subjects are either distorting facts or withholding them to suit their own narrative.

The third and final review is by Şevval Beste Gökçelik on the Turkish language book titled “**Maraş’ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyanları**” (“Armenians in Maraş and the Zeytun Rebellions”). This book gives a detailed account of Ottoman society and inter-communal relations between the Turks and the Armenians by focusing on Zeytun in specific and Maraş in

general. The book argues that the position of Zeytun and its various features made Zeytun a suitable place for the occurrence of frequent Armenian rebellions. It adds that the inflammatory activities of Western-Christian missionaries and Armenian revolutionary committees, and the resulting Armenian rebellions in the region severely damaged the trust in Turkish-Armenians relations and dragged them to a breaking point.

Have a nice reading and best regards,

Editor



## EDITORIAL / BAŞYAZI

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## FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

Alev KILIÇ\*

**Abstract:** *This article covers domestic and international developments of Armenia, the process for concluding the peace agreement with Azerbaijan following the 44-day war of 2020 and Türkiye-Armenia relations in the period of June-November 2022. Two full years have elapsed since the end of the war and the cease-fire agreement signed by the leaders of Azerbaijan and Armenia in Moscow with the participation of the Russian President. It is possible to explain this lapse with the efforts of Armenia using delaying tactics as it appeals to third states with own interests in the region, to minimize its losses and make some gains. There is an active resistance to the peace agreement initiatives of the government also by a radical-militant group in the Diaspora and an opposition in the country, small in numbers but led by the militant Dashnaksutyun-ARF. This is certainly a nuisance for the government, yet it also appears to provide it with a passable excuse. The most serious challenge before the peace agreement is the issue of delimitation and demarcation of the borders as it would lead to the acknowledgement of Karabakh to be within the boundaries of Azerbaijan. With a view to obviating this, an artificial and disputable issue called the Zangezur Corridor is being pushed to the fore. In foreign policy, the efforts to shift to the West without drawing the ire of Russia is being carried out with the re-fashioned concept of multi-vector foreign policy. The US and France, with the assistance of a more neutral and apolitical acting EU, came to the fore in encouraging, even instigating Armenians in this*

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*direction. Relations with Türkiye are moving forward in a step-by-step approach within the process of normalization. On the other hand, the long-established anti-Turk and anti-Türkiye stand of Armenia does not seem to be restrained despite this process.*

**Keywords:** *Pashinyan, Khachaturyan, Mirzoyev, Diaspora, World Council of Churches, Dashnaksutyun-ARF, Karekin II, Aram I, Pelosi, Zangezur Corridor*

**Öz:** *Bu incelemede 2020 yılında meydana gelen 44 gün savaşı sonrası Azerbaycan ile Ermenistan arasında başlayan barış anlaşması süreci, Ermenistan'daki iç gelişmeler, dış dinamikler ve Türkiye-Ermenistan ilişkilerinin Haziran-Kasım 2022 tarihleri arasında gösterdiği gelişmeler ele alınmaktadır. Savaşın sona ermesinin ve Moskova'da Rusya'nın katılımıyla Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan taraflarınca imzalanan ateşkes anlaşmasının üzerinden iki yıl geçmesine rağmen barış anlaşmasının imzalanamamıştır. Bu aksaklığı Ermenistan'ın oyalama taktiklerine başvurarak bölgede farklı çıkarları bulunan üçüncü tarafları kullanıp mağlubiyet sonrası kayıplarını en aza indirme ve birtakım kazanımlar elde etme gayretleriyle açıklamak mümkündür. Diasporada militan-radikal bir kesim, içeride de Taşnaksutyun-EDF güdümüne girmiş sayıca az ancak militan bir muhalefet, hükümetin barış girişimlerine aktif olarak karşı koymaktadır. Bu durum yönetimi rahatsız etse de uygun bir bahane de yaratıyor gibi de görünmektedir. Barış anlaşmasının önündeki en ciddi engel sınırların tespitidir. Zira bu Karabağ'ın Azerbaycan sınırları içinde olduğunun resmen tanınmasını sağlayacaktır. Bunu perdelemek üzere yapay bir engel olarak Zangezur koridoru konusu ön plana çıkarılmaktadır. Dış ilişkilerde Rusya'nın hışmını çekmeden Batı'ya yanaşma çabaları, yeniden gündeme gelen çok vektörlü dış politika anlayışıyla uygulanmaktadır. ABD ve Fransa, daha tarafsız ve apolitik görünüm veren AB'nin de desteğiyle Ermenileri bu yönde cesaretlendirmekte, hatta tahrik etmektedir. Türkiye ile ilişkiler normalleşme süreci kapsamında adım adım da olsa ilerlemektedir. Ancak Ermenistan'ın Türk ve Türkiye karşıtı yaklaşımları bu süreçten hiçbir şekilde etkilenmemiş görünmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Paşinyan, Kaçaturyan, Mirzoyev, Diaspora, Dünya Kiliseler Birliği, Taşnaksutyun-EDF, II. Karekin, I. Aram, Pelosi, Zangezur Koridoru*

## 1. Domestic Developments in Armenia

As a consequence of the Armenian government's inability to take principled and decisive steps towards the signing of the peace agreement evinced by the contradictory statements and retractions, the intensive provocations of the internal opposition (few in numbers, but able to make itself heard through foreign support), and the despair and disgruntlement in Armenia caused by the defeat of the 2020 war against Azerbaijan, uncertainty has continued in Armenia throughout the period.

The Dashnaksutyun-Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) leader and Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia, Ishkhan Saghatelian, announced in June that the coordination of the street protests and demonstrations obstructing daily life, which are being called "resistance" by the opposition, and the responsibility of final decision was assigned to him by the opposition parties. The representatives of the majority party in the National Assembly declared that they would initiate the procedure to unseat the two opposition members of the Assembly, Saghatelian and Vahe Hakobyan (Head of the Standing Committee on Economic Affairs of the National Assembly) who boycotted the Assembly's work.<sup>1</sup> The justification was absenteeism. It was decided during the Assembly meeting held on 1 July that these two representatives would only be dismissed from their positions. On the day of the meeting, the police blocked the roads leading to the Assembly. The two opposition parties represented in the Assembly described this situation as a new indication of the deepening political crisis in Armenia. Prior to the vote, the Speaker of the Assembly stated that the pro-government majority was open to evaluating candidates proposed by the opposition for the vacated posts. Saghatelian stated that they would not nominate new candidates. Moreover, he went even further by claiming that opposition representatives would resign from their other posts, but this did not materialize. In a new statement on 22 July, he announced that the opposition would participate in Assembly's work with its own agenda in September.<sup>2</sup>

Saghatelian went to Strasbourg on 6 July, as the leader of the Armenian ARF, to hold talks in the European Parliament. The leader of the ARF in Armenia, whose links to terrorist acts and record of militant extremism are known, was received by the European Parliament's Vice President and met with some Parliament members.<sup>3</sup> After returning to Yerevan, in a statement he made on

1 "Saghatelian and Vahe Hakobyan recalled from their positions in National Assembly of Armenia", *Arminfo*, July 1, 2022, [https://arminfo.info/full\\_news.php?id=70330&lang=3](https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=70330&lang=3)

2 "Saghatelian: We will start process of removing Prime Minister when we have favorable conditions for it", *News.am*, August 22, 2022, <https://news.am/eng/news/716998.html>

3 "Opposition Leader Saghatelian Meets European Parliamentarians", *Oragark*, July 6, 2022, <https://www.oragark.com/saghatelian-visits-strasbourg-meets-european-parliamentarians/>

11 July, he declared that he would continue to boycott the Assembly sessions and that he would continue his attempts to overthrow the Nikol Pashinyan administration through street demonstrations.

Another development that raised controversy in the public opinion was an attempt by a wealthy businessman with close relations to the government to have a spectacular statue of Jesus built on a mountain close to the capital, despite the objections of the Armenian Apostolic Church.<sup>4</sup> The construction, in which the initial excavation took place on 9 July with a ceremony attended by the Minister of Economy, was halted by the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport shortly after. The Church essentially declared that this attempt was inappropriate and contrary to Armenian Christian traditions.<sup>5</sup>

In the Assembly's session on 12 July, the topic of establishing a new Ministry of Internal Affairs that would be in charge of the police and law enforcement subjects was discussed.<sup>6</sup>

In a draft submitted to the government on 13 July by the National Security Service of Armenia, it was proposed to solidify the rules for naturalization of Diaspora Armenians. With an amendment to the Constitution in 2005, Armenia approved the practice of dual citizenship. The aim was to easily grant citizenship without the requirement of residence, to preserve and strengthen ties with Diaspora Armenians. However, recently, it has been observed that Armenians of Middle Eastern origin, mainly from Syria and Lebanon, have resorted to this option particularly to go to Western countries, hence stricter rules were needed. According to law enforcement authorities, the number of such citizenship applications in the first half of this year was 9917. In the same period of the previous year, this number was only 3448.<sup>7</sup>

The Zangezur Copper Mines, Armenia's most important source of export and the most valuable source of unregistered financial source for the government, were brought to the agenda once again in July with a court decision on how the shares would be divided, as a Russian billionaire, one of its largest shareholders, was placed on the United States sanction list.

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4 Ani Mejlumyan, "Construction of massive Jesus statue in Armenia suspended" *Eurasianet*, July 12, 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/construction-of-massive-jesus-statue-in-armenia-suspended>

5 "Proposal to erect a statue of Jesus on Mount Hatis sparks concern among experts, Yerevani residents", *Jam News*, July 12, 2022, <https://jam-news.net/proposal-to-erect-a-statue-of-jesus-on-mount-hatis-sparks-concern-among-experts-yerevani-residents/>

6 Alexandr Avanesov, "Ministry of Internal Affairs to be reestablished in Armenia", *Arminfo*, July 7, 2022, [https://arminfo.info/full\\_news.php?id=70416&lang=3](https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=70416&lang=3)

7 "Security Service Wants Stricter Citizenship Rules For Diaspora Armenians", *Azatutyun*, July 13, 2022, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31942023.html>

On 14 July, Major General Edward Asrian was appointed as the Chief of the General Staff, which had been vacant since February. Within the scope of the promised “Army Reform Package”, with the amendment implemented before this appointment, the General Staff of the Armenian Armed Forces was subordinated to the Ministry of Defense and was also given the title of Deputy Minister of Defense.<sup>8</sup>

The prominent leader of the Coordinating Council of Armenians Organizations in France (CCAF), Murad Papazyan, and his wife were not admitted to the country at Yerevan airport on 15 July and were deported with the first plane.<sup>9</sup> Papazyan, who is also a bureau member of the ARF, participated in the street demonstrations of the Armenian Dashnaks during his previous visits to Yerevan. Being a person with close ties with the President of France Emmanuel Macron, Papazyan complained to the French Embassy in Yerevan and France’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the treatment he received. Catholicos Aram I, the spiritual leader of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (located in Antelias/Lebanon), also expressed his concern with respect to the latest developments in Armenia, especially the developments in the Türkiye-Armenia normalization process and the ban of ARF Bureau member Papazyan’s entry to Armenia. He declared that “such developments can negatively affect relations between Armenia and the Diaspora. Open and complete information must be provided to the public”.<sup>10</sup>

A similar development occurred on 25 October. Konstantin Zatulin, a Russian parliamentarian of Armenian origin and an advocate of the Armenian cause in Russia who has recently made statements against Pashinyan, was prohibited from entering Armenia. A third ban was imposed on Margarita Simonyan, who is of Armenian origin, known for her closeness to the Russian administration and also for her opposition to Pashinyan and is one of the leading figures of the Russian media.<sup>11</sup> The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia said that they wanted an explanation from Armenia regarding the ban on these two names who are known to the Russian public.<sup>12</sup>

8 “Armenian President Appoints New Army Chief After Months Of Vacancy”, *RFL/RL*, July 15, 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-new-army-chief-asrian/31944932.html>

9 Alexandr Avanesov, “Murad Papazyan intends to fight by all legal means to restore his right to return to Armenia – statement”, *Arminfo*, July 28, 2022, [https://arminfo.info/full\\_news.php?id=70684&lang=3](https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=70684&lang=3)

10 “‘They weaken the Armenian world for the benefit of our enemies’: Murad Papazyan”, *Aravot*, July 19, 2022, <https://www.aravot-en.am/2022/07/19/307739/>

11 Lilit Shahverdyan, “Russian parliamentarian banned from entering Armenia”, *Eurasianet*, October 26, 2022, <https://eurasianet.org/russian-parliamentarian-banned-from-entering-armenia>

12 “Russia asks Armenia to explain banning lawmaker Zatulin and RT head Margarita Simonyan”, *ArmenPress*, October 27, 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1095843.html>



As a result of the explosion that occurred in a shopping center in Yerevan on 14 August, 16 people were killed and many were injured. Two days of mourning were declared in the country.<sup>13</sup>

The estrangement between Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Catholicos Karekin II, spiritual leader of the Armenian Catholicosate of Etchmiadzin, became more evident when the Prime Minister abstained his customary birthday congratulations on the occasion of Karekin II's birthday on 21 August.

Pashinyan, in a speech he gave in the Assembly on 14 September, said that he was ready to sign a peace treaty with Azerbaijan and that he would be “criticized, scolded, called traitor” for it, but declared that Armenia would recognize the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan if Azerbaijan withdrew from the lands it occupied.<sup>14</sup> In response, thousands of people took to the streets and demanded Pashinyan's resignation. The opposition also called for a vote of confidence in the Assembly, but this issue could not be brought to the Assembly agenda as they did not have sufficient numbers. Since it seemed likely that the events were going to get out of hand, Pashinyan emphasized in a new statement on social media that his words were misunderstood, that he did not intend to sign an agreement of surrender and said “no document has been signed. Furthermore, no document is going to be signed”.<sup>15</sup> This statement did not satisfy the opposition or the demonstrators.

On the second anniversary of the Karabakh War of 27 September 2020, government officials did not attend the commemoration ceremonies. It is understood that such a decision was taken not to provoke emotional outbursts and to avoid protests.

Saghatelyan of the ARF, who assumed the leadership of the opposition, called for the three ex-presidents to come together on 13 September. The three former leaders met with the participation of Catholicos Karekin II, discussed the developments and agreed on the continuation of these meetings. In the statements made afterwards, the parties made opposing comments on the past policies and the continuation of the process became unclear.

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13 “Armenia to mourn victims of shopping mall explosion”, *Interfax*, August 16, 2022, <https://interfax.com/newsroom/top-stories/82284/>

14 “Pashinyan says he is ready to sign document that would make people call him traitor”, *Arka News Agency*, September 14, 2022, [http://arka.am/en/news/politics/pashinyan\\_says\\_he\\_is\\_ready\\_to\\_sign\\_document\\_that\\_would\\_make\\_people\\_call\\_him\\_traitor/](http://arka.am/en/news/politics/pashinyan_says_he_is_ready_to_sign_document_that_would_make_people_call_him_traitor/)

15 “Pashinyan Claims He Has Not Signed Agreement with Azerbaijan”, *Asbarez*, September 14, 2022, <https://asbarez.com/pashinyan-claims-he-has-not-signed-agreement-with-azerbaijan/>

The Global Armenian Summit was held on 28-31 October.<sup>16</sup> Approximately 600 representatives from 50 countries attended the event. Opponents of Pashinyan in the Diaspora boycotted the meeting. The two highest officials of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Karekin II and Aram I, also joined the boycott. There were those who considered the meeting to be untimely and claimed that it worsened the division within the Diaspora. Although the attitude of the Diaspora's militant wing towards Pashinyan's administration is known not to be positive, the latest indication of this reaction were the protests and insults that the government's Diaspora High Commissioner faced at the beginning of June, when he went to the US to meet with the Diaspora representatives and carry out preliminary preparations. On the other hand, it is also commented that radical and militant elements opposing Pashinyan and the signing of a peace agreement came to the fore in this way and, in a sense, they were thus exposed and sidelined.

In preparation for the Summit, the Diaspora High Commissioner went to Athens on 22 June with the Prime Minister's decree, and a trilateral meeting was held with the Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Greek Cypriot representative to discuss and determine the rules of cooperation in the Diaspora relations.<sup>17</sup> The trio signed a memorandum of understanding formalizing this cooperation on 24 June. In the statement made by Greece's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is stated in the signed document that they are "working together for the international recognition of the Pontian Genocide, the Armenian Genocide, as well as for the international condemnation of the occupation of Cyprus".

In his statement issued at the end of October, the Minister of Finance predicted that the Armenian economy would grow by at least 11% by the end of the year due to the increasing trade with Russia and the increase in workers' remittances from Russia.<sup>18</sup> According to official data, foreign trade with Russia increased by 70% in the first eight months of the year and exports to Russia doubled, reaching 1.1 billion Dollars. Likewise, workers' remittances tripled in the first 9 months and reached 1 billion Dollars. This amount added up to more than two-thirds of foreign payments to Armenia. The Minister noted that the government's expenditures in the 2023 budget will be 6.4 billion Dollars, that a quarter of it will be allocated to the social sphere, that defense expenses will come second (the same amount of 370 million Dollars has been allocated to the Karabakh Armenians this year) and that the 2023 budget will

16 "Global Armenian Summit", *Office of the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs of Armenia*, October 28, 2022, <http://diaspora.gov.am/en/events/103/globalarmeniansummit>

17 Siranush Gazanchyan, "Armenia, Greece, Cyprus to cooperate on Diaspora issues", *Public Radio of Armenia*, June 24, 2022, <https://en.armradio.am/2022/06/24/armenia-greece-cyprus-to-cooperate-on-diaspora-issues/>.

18 "Armenia Set For Double-Digit Growth In 2022", *Azatutyun*, October 31, 2022, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32109235.html>

be the largest in the country's history. The Governor of the Central Bank also stated in the budget negotiations that this year's growth is predicted to be 12.9%, that inflation has risen to 9.9%, that this growth will decrease next year, and that they foresee a growth of 4.5%.<sup>19</sup>

Saghatelyan, the ARF member who assumed the leadership of the opposition, announced during a press conference at the end of October that the opposition would initiate street demonstrations again after two months, and gave the date of 5 November for the first demonstration to support the Karabakh Armenians. At the demonstration attended by thousands of people, he accused Prime Minister Pashinyan of making unacceptable concessions to Azerbaijan and claimed that Armenia was preparing to hand over full control over Karabakh to Azerbaijan. Afterwards, an opposition statement expressing support for the Karabakh Armenians was approved. The Supreme Spiritual Council of the Armenian Church also pointed out that Armenia was going through difficult times at the meeting held on 1-4 November.<sup>20</sup>

## 2. The Peace Agreement Process Between Armenia and Azerbaijan

Although two years having passed since the 2019 Moscow ceasefire agreement, which ended the war between Azerbaijan and Armenia and set the framework for a peace agreement, it has not been possible to sign a peace agreement. Azerbaijan, the undisputed victor of the war, has clearly and consistently put forth her expectations and demands on legitimate grounds from the very beginning. During this period, Armenia's rhetoric and actions were contradictory. While Armenia stated openly and without hesitation at the highest level that they wanted to sign the peace agreement as soon as possible, in practice, it appeared to be buying time, distracting, ingratiating itself to supporters for its narrative and expectations, and searching for a new solution that would minimize losses.

The developments in the region and the international conjuncture and the changing balance of power have undoubtedly enabled Armenia to adopt such an attitude. The Karabakh war made Russia the main regulating power in the South Caucasus. The OSCE Minsk Group co-chairmanship has lost its functionality and competence. The understanding of resolving the regional order among the countries of the region without involving the non-regional

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19 "Armenia's Budget for 2023 to Increase to \$6.4 Billion Largest in the History of the Country", *MassisPost*, November 1, 2022, <https://massispost.com/2022/11/armenias-budget-for-2023-to-increase-to-6-4-billion-largest-in-the-history-of-the-country/>

20 "Armenian opposition MP calls on all political forces to put aside differences and join the fight for Nagorno-Karabakh", *Arka News Agency*, October 31, 2022, [http://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenian\\_opposition\\_mp\\_calls\\_on\\_all\\_political\\_forces\\_to\\_put\\_aside\\_differences\\_and\\_join\\_the\\_fight\\_for/](http://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenian_opposition_mp_calls_on_all_political_forces_to_put_aside_differences_and_join_the_fight_for/)

powers has gained impetus. In such a setting, it is clear that Armenia does not have much margin to bend the commitments envisaged in the ceasefire agreement, in view of the actual state of affairs and the agreements that make Armenia dependent on Russia on a wide spectrum.

However, the ongoing Ukraine war has led to some important changes with the following developments: Russia's isolation by the Western world, Russia being subjected to disruptive sanctions, and the war not progressing in line with Russia's predictions (on the contrary, the impression has been made that Russia is in a state of military weakness). This has intensified the West's (the US with France and the EU keenly assessing the situation) initiatives towards establishing its influence in the region. This winfall development has opened a new window of opportunity for Armenia, which has traditionally received financial and moral support from the West for multi-faceted reasons.

After the 44-day war, Azerbaijan retrieved her occupied lands around Karabakh and a part of Karabakh, while the other part, where the Armenian population was concentrated, was temporarily left under the control of the Russian peacekeepers on the grounds of the population's security. Although there is no doubt that Karabakh is within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the Armenian minority in part of it there formed an illegal administration. Eventhough it is not officially recognized by any country (including Armenia), it carried on with its claim to be an independent state by defining itself as the "Republic of Artsakh" and continued to bring its claims to the agenda on every possible occasion with the explicit or implicit support of Armenia. This situation has been a convenient topic for exploitation in the struggle for influence in the region between Russia and the West.

At the end of May, the Mayor of Paris paid an official visit to Yerevan, followed by a visit with her delegation to the illegal Armenian administration of Karabakh.<sup>21</sup> Likewise, in a statement made by the Catholicosate of Cilicia (Antelias), it was announced that Catholicos Aram I met in Lebanon with the illegal administration's "president of the national assembly" on 27 May.<sup>22</sup> During the same trip, the "president" also visited the Greek Cypriot Administration and held talks there. The Secretary of the Armenian Security Council stated "It is the rights and security of Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh that will determine the status of the republic" during a statement on 3 June. The Minister of Foreign Affairs also made a statement in the same vein on 17 June and asserted:

21 "President of Artsakh receives delegation led by Mayor of Paris Anne Hidalgo", *Ilurer*, May 27, 2022, <https://www.ilurer.am/en/2022/05/27/President-of-Artsakh-receives-delegation-led-by-Mayor-of-Paris-Anne-Hidalgo/730815>

22 "Artsakh milletvekilleri Kilikiya Katolikosu I. Aram ile bir araya geldi", *Ermeni Haber Ajansı*, 27 Mayıs 2022, <https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2022/05/27/Artsakh-milletvekilleri-Kilikiya-Katolikosu/231767>

“The addressing of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is fundamental, which should include the provisions of ensuring the security and all the rights of the people of Artsakh, and final determination of the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.”

The West’s interest in the region increased and reached a peak first with the EU taking the lead, then taken over by the US during the period. The US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Karen Donfried conducted a comprehensive visit to the region on 15-19 June and clarified the role that the US wanted to undertake.<sup>23</sup> Acting on the assumption that peace and stability in the South Caucasus depend on the resolution of local conflicts, especially in Karabakh, Donfried said that the Joe Biden administration of the US is very much interested in the region. The visits of senior US officials to the region have increased. The US Secretary of State Antony Blinken increased his contacts with the regional leaders, conveying the message to the effect that the West’s effective and collective support can be relied upon. It has not gone unnoticed that one of the goals of these visits and statements, which increased during the period of the Ukraine war, could be to put Russia under pressure on another front.

In a TV interview during the last part of his visit to Yerevan on 18 June, Donfried emphasized that they are ready to work with Russia within the framework of the Minsk Group.<sup>24</sup> The response of the spokesperson of Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs was prompt, stating that France and the US caused irreparable damage to Russia’s and the Minsk Group’s work, that one cannot act as if nothing had happened, and that the new realities should be taken into account. During here visit to Baku on 20 June, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Sergey Lavrov made a similar statement explaining that the Minsk Group has lost its functionality,<sup>25</sup> and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov underlined the same view. On the other hand, the Prime Minister of Armenia objected to the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs’ statement that the Minsk Group no longer functions and declared that this view contradicts an article of the Joint Declaration signed with the President of Russia Vladimir Putin in April, that this contradiction should be resolved and that the Minsk Group is not dead. On the same day, the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia met with the co-chairman

23 “The U.S. Embassy to Armenia welcomes Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Karen Donfried to Yerevan”, *US Embassy in Armenia*, June 18, 2022, <https://am.usembassy.gov/embassy-welcomes-donfried/>

24 “US will continue to participate in Minsk Group format” - US Assistant State Secretary in Yerevan”, *Jam News*, June 22, 2022, <https://jam-news.net/us-will-continue-to-participate-in-minsk-group-format-us-assistant-state-secretary-in-yerevan/>

25 “Lavrov: AB ve NATO, Rusya ile savaşmak için koalisyon kuruyor”, *Cumhuriyet*, 24 Haziran 2022, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/dunya/lavrov-ab-ve-nato-rusya-ile-savasmak-icin-koalisyon-kuruyor-1950941>

of the Minsk Group of France in Paris. Both sides agreed on the need to reach a comprehensive solution in Karabakh “under the auspices of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship”.<sup>26</sup>

The format titled “3+3”, which foresees the establishment of peace and stability in the region through meetings between the countries of the region, without the intervention of non-regional powers, was brought to the agenda again in June. The follow up to the first meeting that was held in Moscow in December 2021 was discussed in the session between the Turkish and Russian Foreign Ministers on 8 June. It was also announced that the second meeting was planned to be held in Iran before the end of the year, during the visit of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan to Iran in July. Afterwards, although the National Security Council Secretary of Iran made a statement regarding the holding of this meeting in Iran during his visit to Yerevan, the statement was not included in the official reports.

The Lachin Corridor, which provides connectivity between Armenia and Karabakh, was shifted to the north by constructing a new road, as foreseen in the 2020 Memorandum. Moreover, as of 25 August, three more villages on the old route were transferred to the Azerbaijani administration. Thus, Azerbaijan proved once again that it continues to resolutely implement the 2020 Agreement.

The US appointed a new Minsk Group co-chair on 25 August.<sup>27</sup> The US Secretary of State Blinken declared that the US is committed to helping Armenia and Azerbaijan negotiate to find a long-term political solution to the Karabakh conflict. Blinken added that the new co-chair will “engage bilaterally with like-minded partners such as the EU, and through his role as an OSCE Minsk Group co-chair, to facilitate direct dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan.” The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan rejected the statement of the US Secretary of State and stated that “The US risks being left out of the Armenian-Azerbaijani peace process with its attempts to ‘revive the Minsk Group’.” Likewise, the Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan reiterated the words of the Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev and said “The Karabakh conflict is resolved and Karabakh is an integral part of Azerbaijan”.

Two high-ranking officials of Armenia and Azerbaijan, the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia and the Head of the Foreign Policy Department of the Presidency of Azerbaijan, met in Brussels on 19 August under the

26 “Armenia’s Security Council Secretary meets with French Co-Chair of OSCE Minsk Group in Paris”, *ArmenPress*, June 28, 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1087111.html>

27 “U.S. Appoints New OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair”, *Hetq*, August 25, 2022, <https://hetq.am/en/article/147636>

mediation of the EU.<sup>28</sup> It was the first meeting of these two countries' senior officials, following the small-scale conflict on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border at the beginning of August. This meeting also proved to be the preparation for the two countries' leaders to meet again in Brussels. In the statement made by the Presidency of the Council of the EU on 25 August, it was announced that the leaders of the two countries would meet with the President of the European Council on 31 August. Thus, the leaders of the two countries came together for the fourth time after the previous meetings of December 2021, April 2022, and May 2022.

Following the meeting on 31 August, which lasted for about four hours, the President of the European Council provided information concerning the issues discussed. The topics are as follows:<sup>29</sup>

*“-Peace Agreement:* Today we agree to step up substantive work to advance on the peace treaty governing inter-state relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan and tasked the Foreign Ministers to meet within one month to work on draft texts.

*-Humanitarian issues:* We also had a detailed discussion on humanitarian issues, including demining, detainees and the fate of missing persons. President Michel stressed to Azerbaijan the importance of further release of Armenian detainees. The EU will continue to be engaged in these questions.

*-Border issues:* We reviewed progress on all questions related to the delimitation of the border and how best to ensure a stable situation. We agreed that the next meeting of the Border Commissions will take place in Brussels in November.

*-Connectivity:* We reviewed progress of discussions on the modalities for unblocking the transport links.”

The next meeting with the leaders of the two countries was announced to be held in November. However, as the President of France made some very biased and accusatory remarks against Azerbaijan, and the French Senate passed unacceptable resolutions in favor of Armenia, the President of

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28 “Brüksel’de Ermenistan Güvenlik Konseyi Sekreteri ile Azerbaycan Cumhurbaşkanı Yardımcısı Hikmet Hacıyev görüşü”, *ArmenPress*, 2 Mayıs 2022, <https://armenpress.am/tur/news/1082199/>

29 “Press statement by President Charles Michel following the trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 31 August 2022”, *European Council*, August 31, 2022, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/08/31/press-statement-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia-31-august-2022/>

Azerbaijan Aliyev declared that he would not attend a meeting should the French President Macron take part.

In the statement made by the President of the European Council at the end of the meeting and within the scope of the issues discussed, it stood out that subjects of the Armenian minority in Karabakh and the efforts to revive the Minsk Group were not mentioned.

Russia has questioned the EU mediation in the Armenia-Azerbaijan talks. The Spokesperson of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia vigorously criticized this initiative of the EU in her press statement on 31 August. In her statements, the spokesperson explained:

“The EU’s activity in the South Caucasus is determined by geopolitical ambitions [...] this basically has nothing to do with a real desire to facilitate the normalization of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations [...] these are pseudo-initiatives of the Europeans [...] They are more like an attempt to shamelessly appropriate the laurels of mediation [from Russia] which is not backed up by anything [...] We, as mediators, are working, and this work brings concrete results and is assessed accordingly by the parties [...] As for those who pretend to be mediators while not being intermediaries, apparently they are just not capable of offering anything.”<sup>30</sup>

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Ararat Mirzoyan informed his Russian counterpart about the summit by phone on 1 September. The Armenian Minister went to Moscow four days later and they discussed the developments face to face. Pashinyan also attended the seventh Eastern Economic Forum held in Vladivostok on 5 September and provided first-hand information to Russian President Putin regarding the latest developments. In the meeting he held with the Armenian community living in Vladivostok, Pashinyan stated (concerning his meeting with the President of Azerbaijan) “I must say that during the meeting we did not manage to register common positions on the most important issues preoccupying us” and expressed that they could not find a common ground of consensus.<sup>31</sup>

The illegal administration of Karabakh Armenians celebrated the 31st anniversary of their establishment on 2 September.<sup>32</sup> The Armenian

30 “Zakharova: ‘EU’s real desire has nothing to do with normalization of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations’”, *Apa.az*, August 31, 2022, <https://apa.az/en/foreign-policy/zakharova-eus-real-desire-has-nothing-to-do-with-normalization-of-azerbaijani-armenian-relations-383743>

31 “Pashinyan, Putin Meet in Vladivostok, Discuss Karabakh, Economic Issues”, *Hetq*, September 7, 2022, <https://hetq.am/en/article/147994>

32 “Artsakh is celebrating 31st anniversary of declaration of statehood”, *Ilurer*, September 2, 2022, <https://www.ilurer.am/en/2022/09/02/Artsakh-is-celebrating-31st-anniversary-of-declaration-of-statehood/787363>



government and assembly did not send an official delegation to the celebrations this year either. In the message he published on this occasion, Pashinyan stated:

“Our compatriots continue to live in Nagorno Karabakh or in the remaining part of it. They have the right to live in their [home], in a safe environment, where their rights will be protected. Basically, this is the essence of the Nagorno Karabakh conflict. All statements claiming that Nagorno Karabakh doesn’t exist as a territorial entity and that the Nagorno Karabakh conflict is resolved are inappropriate as long as the issues of the security and protection of rights of the Armenians of ‘Artsakh’ aren’t irreversibly addressed, and subsequently also the issue of the status of Nagorno Karabakh, for which the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chairmanship has a mandate approved by the international community, which is still in force”.

It is known that the strongest support for the Armenians concerning the Karabakh issue is based on religion. The eleventh session of the World Council of Churches (WCC), which convenes every seven years, was held in Karlsruhe, Germany, between 31 August and 8 September. Among the eight presidents elected to represent different geographical regions and sects was Catholicos Aram I, the spiritual leader of the Armenian Catholicosate of Cilicia (Antelias), known for his militant anti-Türkiye and anti-Turkish sentiments. A statement concerning Karabakh of 8 September was also published among the council’s closing documents. At the end of the statement, WCC “calls for the start of meaningful dialogue for a just and peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group” and indicates that “The World Union of Churches requests the WCC and all member churches to remain engaged in Christian solidarity with the churches and people of Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh in their search for a just and sustainable peace”.<sup>33</sup>

The new Minsk Group co-chair appointed by the US visited Armenia on 8 September. When the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia Mirzoyan received the co-chair, he wished him success in this demanding task. The Armenian Minister emphasized the importance of utilizing the potential and experience of the Minsk Group co-chairmanship in the process of finding a permanent and comprehensive solution to the Karabakh conflict.

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33 “World Council of Churches General Assembly speaks to issues in the Middle East and Europe”, *GlobalMinistries.org*, September 8, 2022, <https://www.globalministries.org/world-council-of-churches-general-assembly-speaks-to-issues-in-the-middle-east-and-europe/>

During the early morning hours of 13 September, there were clashes on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, which resulted in heavy casualties. The Prime Minister of Armenia immediately accused Azerbaijan of aggression and violation of the territorial integrity of Armenia and requested military assistance, primarily from Russia and the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO). Azerbaijan, on the other hand, expressed that Armenia engaged in mine-laying attempts and other military forms of harassment and provocation along the yet-to-be established border, and that the Azerbaijani army responded in kind. This development, which reflects Pashinyan's perception that Azerbaijan has been preparing to attack for some time, and that Russia and the CSTO, unlike during the Karabakh war, will have to act regarding the claim of attacking the territory of Armenia was perceived with caution by Russia and CSTO.

The US immediately intervened in the situation and following the US Secretary of State's meeting with Pashinyan, Blinken stated that the US was deeply concerned about the reported attacks on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border and demanded that the clashes be ended immediately. The President of France also stepped in and invited the UN Security Council to meet urgently to discuss the issue. In the statement made by Russia, it was explained that a ceasefire was achieved through the mediation of Russia. During the meetings held at the UNSC, France clearly took into account the Armenian allegations, while the US was more cautious. The fighting parties were asked to abide by the ceasefire.

The US Secretary of State Blinken held a trilateral meeting on 19 September with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York on the occasion of the 77th session of the UN General Assembly. In a statement following the meeting, Blinken indicated;

“We are encouraged by the fact that the fighting has ceased and there have not been any additional military actions over the last few days. In my latest calls with both Prime Minister Pashinyan and President Aliyev, both leaders told me that they are ready for peace. The United States is prepared to do whatever it can to support these efforts.”

Although no agreement was reached during the meeting, the US Secretary of State suggested the parties to meet again bilaterally before the end of the month. Blinken also met with Prime Minister Pashinyan in New York on 22 September and discussed similar issues.<sup>34</sup>

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34 “Secretary Antony J. Blinken, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan, And Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov Before Their Meeting”, *US Department of State*, November 7, 2022 <https://www.state.gov/secretary-antony-j-blinken-armenian-foreign-minister-ararat-mirzoyan-and-azerbaijani-foreign-minister-jeyhun-bayramov-before-their-meeting/>

The trilateral contacts of the US continued on 28 September, this time the US National Security Advisor met with the Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia and the President of Azerbaijan's foreign policy head. The US official described the talks as constructive and expressed that they discussed the concrete steps that could be taken. Meanwhile, the Spokesperson of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, this time vehemently criticized the mediation attempts of the US, accusing the West of seizing the Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiation process and using it against Moscow in the increasingly tense geopolitical environment.

Armenia and Azerbaijan's Ministers of Foreign Affairs held a bilateral meeting in Geneva during early October, as agreed with the US Secretary of State in their 19 September meeting. The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan also met with the co-chair of the US Minsk Group in Geneva and claimed by showing some videos that the Azerbaijani army committed war crimes in the last conflict. The EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus also took up this claim and called for its investigation. Azerbaijan rejected these allegations and claimed that it was a photomontage. Once again, instead of working on the draft peace agreement, the Armenian minister was able to shift the agenda. The US Secretary of State had a three-way phone call with the two ministers on 5 October and received information about the Geneva meeting.

In his speech at the European Parliament on 5 October, the EU Foreign Policy Chief accused Azerbaijan of occupying the territory of Armenia and stated that they offered to send a mediation mission to the border, that Armenia accepted and Azerbaijan refused.

The leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan met for the fifth time in Prague on 6 October under the umbrella of the EU. The following statement was published after the meeting:

“Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Nikol Pashinyan and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev met on October 6, 2022 in Prague, within the framework of the first meeting of the ‘European Political Community’ held at the initiative of the President of the Republic of France and the President of the European Council.

Armenia and Azerbaijan recognize each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty in accordance with the UN Law and the 1991 Alma-Ata Declaration, to which they confirm their commitment. The countries established that this will constitute the basis for the border delimitation commission's work and that the next border commission's meeting would be held late October in Brussels.

Armenia expressed its agreement to facilitate a EU civilian mission alongside its border with Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan did not accept it, but

agreed to cooperate with this mission to the necessary extent. The mission will begin in October for a period of two months at most. The aim of the mission is to build confidence and contribute to the border commissions through its reports.”

The leading group of the EU civil mission went to Armenia on 14 October and started the preparatory work. On 17 October, the EU countries decided to send 40 EU Monitoring officers. The European Council also announced that these officers will be temporarily reinforced with 200 EU observers stationed in Georgia.<sup>35</sup>

The US Secretary of State called the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan on 10 October and was informed regarding the Prague meeting. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia also held a comprehensive meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia on 12 October in Astana, where the Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth of Independent States was held and exchanged views on the recent sessions.

Russia, which did not hide its concern and dissatisfaction with the West’s efforts to establish influence in the region and hijack the peace process, held a trilateral meeting of Foreign Ministers in Astana on 14 October, with the initiative of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The President of Russia, who was in Astana for the summit, also made an open invitation to hold a trilateral meeting in Russia as soon as possible.

In his address to the Muslim religious leaders meeting of the Organization of Turkic States on 20 October, the Chairman of Azerbaijan’s Caucasian Muslims Office called on the Armenian Apostolic Church to end the hatred, sabotage, and vengeance.

At the invitation of the President of Russia, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Sochi on 31 October. The Russian President first met with the leaders bilaterally, and afterwards met in a trilateral format. The text of the agreement reached by the parties at the Sochi summit is as follows<sup>36</sup>:

“We, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan I. H. Aliyev, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia N. V. Pashinyan and President of the Russian Federation V. V. Putin, met in Sochi on 31 October 2022 and discussed the implementation of the trilateral statements of 9 November 2020, 11 January and 26 November 2021.

35 Alexandra Brzozowski, “EU deploys Armenia-Azerbaijan border-monitoring mission, but questions remain”, *Euractiv*, October 18, 2022, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/eu-deploys-armenia-azerbaijan-border-monitoring-mission-but-questions-remain/>

36 “Statement by President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia and President of the Russian Federation”, *Presidency of Azerbaijan*, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/57744>

We reaffirmed our commitment to strict compliance with all these agreements in the interests of the comprehensive normalization of Azerbaijani-Armenian relations, ensuring a lasting peace, stability, security and sustainable economic development of the South Caucasus.

We agreed to make additional effort to urgently resolve the remaining tasks, including the block of humanitarian issues.

Noting the key contribution of the Russian peacekeeping contingent to ensuring security in the zone of its deployment, we emphasized the relevance of its efforts to stabilize the situation in the region.

We agreed to refrain from the use or the threat of using force, to discuss and resolve all problematic issues solely on the basis of mutual recognition of sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of borders in accordance with the UN Charter and the Alma-Ata Declaration of 1991.

We emphasized the importance of active preparation for the signing of a peace treaty between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia in order to achieve sustainable and lasting peace in the region. On the basis of the currently developed proposals, it was agreed to continue the search for acceptable solutions.

The Russian Federation will render all possible assistance in this.

We emphasized the importance of creating a positive atmosphere between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia to continue the dialogue between representatives of the public, expert communities and religious leaders with Russian assistance, as well as launching trilateral inter-parliamentary contacts in order to strengthen confidence between the peoples of the two countries.

The leaders of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia welcome the readiness of the Russian Federation to continue to contribute in every possible way to the normalization of relations between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Armenia, ensuring stability and prosperity in the South Caucasus.

President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, President of the Russian Federation

I. H. Aliyev

N. V. Pashinyan

V. V. Putin”

### 3. Armenia's Foreign Relations

During the period, Armenia's primary goal in foreign relations was to overcome its deadlock and estrangement after the Karabakh war, open up to the West without drawing Russia's ire by taking advantage of Russia's increasing vulnerability, to ingratiate itself with Western powers to support its interests (which Armenia named as "multi-vector foreign policy" in the past) and compensate its losses and to obtain new gains, particularly by playing the West against Russia to the extent possible.

President of Armenia Vahagn Khachaturyan paid an official visit to neighboring Georgia on 30 May. Prime Minister Pashinyan held a day-long working meeting with the Georgian Prime Minister in the border town on 17 June. Pashinyan made a working visit to Tbilisi on 19 August, and both prime ministers inaugurated the friendship bridge on the border, which will facilitate transportation between Armenia and Georgia.

The President of Iran Ebrahim Raisi had an extensive phone call with Pashinyan on 2 June, discussing the situation in the region and the latest developments. During the period, Armenia-Iran relations became closer than ever before and almost acquired the appearance of an alliance relationship. The Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran went to Armenia for a working visit on 7 July. The Iranian official, who also met with Pashinyan, said that Iran wanted to deepen its ties with Armenia "in all spheres". According to the Iranian news agency IRNA, Iran sees no limitations in expanding bilateral ties. Iran stated that the transit from Chabahar Port to the north will also develop the Syunik (Zangezur) region.

In a statement he made on 22 September, the Chief of General Staff of Iran said that they would not accept a change on the Armenian border and that they had the strength to oppose it. These statements were the repetitions of the previous statements of the Iranian President and the spiritual leader by a military official. The President of Iran, with whom the Armenian Prime Minister met on 22 September in New York, where they attended the UN General Assembly meeting, repeated similar statements also on this occasion. During a speech he delivered on 12 October, Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian re-emphasized that they are against any change in the Armenian border.

The Iranian armed forces started a comprehensive military exercise on the Azerbaijan-Armenia border on 19 October. The exercise, which included tanks crossing over the Aras River with pontoon bridges, constituted a message of support to Armenia and a threat to Azerbaijan. Iran's Minister of Foreign Affairs Amir-Abdollahian also did not hide this during a statement

he made on 19 October and made a connection with the exercise and the subject of the border with Armenia not changing. The next day, on 20 October, Amir-Abdollahian went to Armenia for an official visit, met with the Prime Minister and the Vice President as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Yerevan. The following day, he inaugurated a new Consulate General of Iran with the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Syunik Province's Kapan town, adjacent to the Iranian border, near which the Zangezur Corridor passes. In the speeches in which praises were mutually showered, the Iranian Minister said that "Iran considers Armenia's security as its own security". Ultimately, Prime Minister Pashinyan went to Tehran on 1 November, upon the invitation of the President of Iran. In the historical Sadabad Palace, the two leaders signed a cooperation memorandum between their countries.<sup>37</sup>

Relations with the US have also reached an advanced level with numerous meetings. On 2 June, the head of the United States European Command Regional Military Cooperation Department visited Armenia to discuss issues of cooperation in the field of defense. On the same date, Armenia implemented an amendment bringing restrictions to the "Cooperation in the Area of Prevention of Proliferation of Technology, Pathogens and Expertise That Could Be Used in the Development of Biological Weapons" signed with the US in 2010. This agreement, which allowed the US to also establish biological laboratories in Armenia, had led to a reaction from Russia.

The Assistant Secretary of State of the US for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor visited Armenia on 9 June.

The Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs at the US Department of State Donfried visited Armenia on 17-18 June and had high-level meetings. Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan praised the Armenia-US Strategic Dialogue which was launched in May.

The head of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) made an unexpected visit to Armenia on 15 July, where he met with the Prime Minister and his Armenian counterpart. This visit was a first in the relations between the two countries. Three days later, the head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service went to Armenia and held similar meetings.

During his visit to the US, the Armenian Minister of Defense met with the Undersecretary of the US Ministry of Defense on 8 September. At the meeting, defense cooperation between the two countries was discussed in its entirety and it was agreed to expand the partnership in peacekeeping missions, military

<sup>37</sup> "Paşinyanın İrana səfəri dönüş nöqtəsi olacaq", İ.Rəisi", *TRT Azərbaycan*, 1 Kasım 2022, <https://www.trt.net.tr/azerbaycan/bolg-x-b-rl-ri/2022/11/01/pasinyanin-irana-s-f-ri-donus-noqt-si-olacaq-i-r-isi-1900625>

education, military medicine, and other fields. The Armenian minister also visited the Kansas National Guard headquarters, a linchpin of long existing military connections.

On 18 September, Speaker of the US House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi visited Armenia with three pro-Armenian representatives, two of whom are of Armenian descent. In Pelosi's own words, it was a family visit with this delegation. Pelosi's visit constituted the highest-level US delegation to Armenia to date. During her visit, Pelosi made various emotional statements including opposition to Russia, Azerbaijan, and Türkiye. On 23 September, the US Embassy in Yerevan published the revised official text of Pelosi's press conference with the Armenian counterpart on 18 September, to put on record at least an official wording without polemics.<sup>38</sup>

The Secretary of the Security Council of Armenia went to the US on 26 September to hold various meetings. His first meeting was with the White House National Security Advisor and a trilateral meeting was held with the Azerbaijani representative. Afterwards, he met with the Deputy Secretary of State and attended meetings at the CIA headquarters on 30 September.

On 18 October, another US Congressional delegation visited Armenia. The head of the delegation addressed the Armenian Assembly and held high-level meetings. The head of the delegation stated; "We are against the invasion of Armenia's sovereign territory and are demanding that Azerbaijan return to its initial positions".

Relations with Greece also gained new momentum during the period. On 2 June, Greece's Deputy Minister of National Defense visited Armenia. On 24 June, the Memorandum on Trilateral Cooperation on Diaspora issues was signed between Armenia, Greece, and the Greek Cypriot Administration of Southern Cyprus (GCASC) in Athens. Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan went to Greece for a two-day working visit on 27 June. The Foreign Minister, who was also received by the Greek Prime Minister, emphasized the historical Armenian-Greek brotherhood in his meeting with his Greek counterpart and stated that the Armenian-Greek relations developed not only on bilateral but also on multilateral prominent platforms. He specifically pointed out three dimensions,

"First of all, the cooperation within the framework of the Armenia-Greece-Cyprus trilateral format was at the center of our negotiations.

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38 "Speaker Pelosi Remarks at Congressional Delegation Press Conference with Armenian Speaker Alen Simonyan", *US Embassy in Armenia*, September 18, 2022, <https://am.usembassy.gov/speaker-pelosi-remarks/>



Secondly, we emphasize the importance of signing of the multilateral agreement on the establishment of the Persian Gulf-Black Sea international transport-transit corridor. We also exchanged views on issues on the Armenia-EU partnership and the Eastern Partnership.”

At the end of the talks, a cooperation memorandum was signed between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries. The foreign ministers of the trilateral format also met on 19 September in New York, where they attended the UN General Assembly’s 77th session.

The Greek Minister of Foreign Affairs went to Armenia for an official visit on 27 September. This was the second visit of the Greek Minister after October 2020. During his meetings, he also met with the Armenian Prime Minister and the Minister of Defense. The Greek minister, targeting Azerbaijan and Türkiye in his speeches, stated “Turkey is trying to take advantage of the recent turmoil in order to undermine peace and stability, be it in the Caucasus or the Aegean.”

The Prime Ministers of Armenia and Greece met on the margins of the European Political Community summit in Prague on 7 October, and they emphasized the trilateral format cooperation once again.

CSTO Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Yerevan on 10 June. Armenia had much to complain on the inaction of the organization. This was further raised on the Foreign Ministers meeting of the organization in Yerevan on 21 November and at the Summit on 23 November which the President of Russia also attended. Pashinyan even refrained from signing the final statement, giving rise to the speculations whether Armenia would be leaving the organization, an outcome much propagated by the Western press.

Armenia’s Minister of Foreign Affairs officially visited Bulgaria on 14-15 June.<sup>39</sup> During the visit, the preliminary preparations for the President of Armenia’s official visit to Bulgaria on 18 October were also discussed.

Prime Minister Pashinyan visited Qatar on 13 June. During the visit, in which many cooperation documents were signed, Yerevan and Doha were declared as sister cities. In an interview with the *Al-Jazeera* TV channel, Pashinyan explained “It is not so easy to be a direct, honest, reliable partner for both Russia and the West, our duty is not to betray anyone.”

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe visited Armenia on 16-17 June.

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39 “Armenian FM meets with Bulgarian President”, *ArmenPress*, June 14, 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1085911.html>.

Armenian President Khachaturyan attended the St. Petersburg International Economy Fair on 18 June. The President of Russia, whom he met in the margin of the meeting, stated that “Armenia is not just our partner, it is also our strategic ally, and we appreciate it”.

In June, Armenia also participated in the military mountain training organized by NATO for three weeks in Georgia within the framework of the Partnership for Peace program. Other military enrollments were from Georgia, the US, Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The Canadian government decided to open a resident embassy in Armenia on 29 June. Russia rejected the statements targeting Russia in the justification for the embassy’s opening.

The Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of India arrived in Armenia on 4 July for the intergovernmental commission meeting. During the meeting, the subjects of deepening bilateral relations and long-term military cooperation were discussed.

On 6 July, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia paid a working visit to Spain.

Pashinyan went to Kyrgyzstan on 25 August to attend the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting. During his meeting with the Russian Prime Minister, concrete projects for the development of bilateral economic relations were discussed.

The President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) visited Armenia on 15 September as part of his tour of the South Caucasus.

The Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) visited Armenia on 4-5 October. It was noted that the shortcomings of the Metsamor nuclear power plant, which is the most important issue within the agency’s area of interest and responsibility, and its expiry were not sufficiently emphasized. It was announced that the life span of the facility, which became operational in 1980 and had to be shut down in 2017 with its extensions, has been extended until 2036 this time. This Chernobyl-type facility, which is only 30 km away from the Turkish border, meets 40% of Armenia’s electricity production.

Prime Minister Pashinyan addressed the UN General Assembly on 23 September. The entire speech was addressed to Azerbaijan and the peace process.

A delegation from the members of the Armenian friendship group of the Swiss parliament went to Yerevan on 14 October and supported the independence of the Karabakh Armenians in their statements. The adoption of a resolution on the same date titled “For the survival of Armenia” conveying a similar demand at the cantonal council of Geneva, where the headquarters of the WCC is located was indicative that Switzerland is far from the current facts and impartiality.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia paid an official visit to the Vatican on 25 October, met with the Cardinal Secretary of State and was received by the Pope. Mirzoyan also met in Rome with the Chancellor of the Knights of Malta, a leading Christian religious sect.

#### 4. Relations with Türkiye

The normalization process that started in Türkiye-Armenia relations, with the mutual appointment of “Special Representatives” and the special representatives’ holding three meetings, the first in Moscow and the other two in Vienna, has warmed up and reached higher levels in the period. Armenia wants to carry out this process exclusively from the perspective of bilateral relations and to ensure rapid development in the issues they prioritize such as opening borders and establishing diplomatic relations. Türkiye has no objections to these issues, but approaches the normalization from a regional perspective, gives priority to ensuring peace and stability in the region, and aims to contribute to that goal. On the other hand, Armenia’s sincerity in the normalization of relations with Türkiye is mired in uncertainty in view of Armenia’s inimical activities against Türkiye, the trilateral front it formed with Greece and the Greek Cypriot Administration and the clearly declared objectives of this front to always taking a stand in opposition to Türkiye’s relations with third parties and trying to gain some benefit from it. These are questionable attitudes and policies for a country preaching normalization.

The Armenian Foreign Minister made the following comment on the Türkiye-Armenia normalization process on 9 June at the press conference held on the occasion of the visit of his Russian colleague<sup>40</sup>:

“The Armenian side is happy to hear statements by the top leadership of Turkey that they are going and are ready to normalize and establish diplomatic relations with Armenia and open the Armenian-Turkish border. On the other hand, we see differences in approaches in a sense that Turkey constantly announces that this normalization process must

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40 “FM Mirzoyan comments on Armenia-Turkey normalization process”, *ArmenPress*, June 9, 2022, <https://armenpress.am/eng/news/1085589/>

take place without any precondition, but we regularly see connection between the Armenia-Turkey normalization process and the Armenia-Azerbaijan processes. A connection that the representatives of Turkey's leadership are trying to find or highlight on every occasion. We don't think that this is constructive. There are also some differences in a sense that we have different ideas about pace. Nevertheless, I want to state once again that hearing statements by Turkey that they are going to open the closed border with Armenia is welcome"

With the statement made by the Foreign Ministries of both countries on 28 June, it was announced that the fourth meeting between the special representatives of the two countries would be held on 1 July 2022 in Vienna.

Prime Minister Pashinyan held a comprehensive online press conference on 28 June. The part of his speech about Türkiye and the normalization process is below:

"There is an opportunity for a positive shift, and we must do everything to use it. If negotiations are ongoing, then there is a realization that a settlement is possible and we need to move forward in small steps. However, some statements that come from Turkey have a negative impact on this process, create a negative background. Particularly the 'Zangezur corridor' wording. This refers to the road through the territory of Armenia, which will connect Azerbaijan with its exclave Nakhichevan. The Armenian side has repeatedly announced that it agrees to unblock communications, but with the preservation of sovereign control over these roads, since the term "corridor" implies a loss of sovereignty. At the same time, dissatisfaction with the statements of the Turkish side does not mean the end of the dialogue with the Armenian side."<sup>41</sup>

The Armenian Special Representative Ruben Rubinyan, who is also the Vice President of the Armenian National Assembly, made some statements to the press correspondents in the Assembly on 30 June before the fourth meeting:

"Armenia does not see much progress in the negotiation process with Ankara. Since the beginning of the process, Armenia has been very constructive. Armenia has the political will and has shown that will for quickly reaching the normalization. The success of this process depends on the respective political will of Turkey. As you can see, up to this point there has not been much progress. There is no specific document

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41 Ani Avetisyan and Ismi Aghayev, "Pashinyan confirms the city of Lachin to be handed to Azerbaijan", *OC Media*, June 28, 2022, <https://oc-media.org/pashinyan-confirms-the-city-of-lachin-to-be-handed-to-azerbaijan/>

on the table and there is no issue of ‘re-delimitation’ of borders on the agenda. Ankara’s proposal to hold one of the meetings in Yerevan implies that our Turkish colleagues consider the process to be two-sided. The statements of some Turkish officials that they coordinate or have coordinated the process with Azerbaijan are a bit strange. But I repeat that the main thing in the process is political will, if there is a will, the rest is easy to solve. The lack of progress so far does not mean there cannot be any in the future. And also it doesn’t mean that it will definitely give results. Turkey’s Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, last week, said that Ankara was anticipating for the opening of the ‘corridor’ — a scheme being advanced by Azerbaijan’s President Ilham Aliyev, who wants a land route to connect mainland Azerbaijan with Nakhichevan. These statements in no way contribute to the Armenia-Turkey normalization process, perhaps, they have the opposite effect — they hinder that process. There is no term ‘Zangezur corridor’ on our agenda. Armenia has not discussed it, is not discussing and will not discuss any project in a corridor logic.”<sup>42</sup>

The Zangezur Corridor issue continues to be a major agenda item in Armenia. At the cabinet meeting on the same day, the Secretary of National Security underlined that no road passing through Armenia could be called a corridor and stated that border and customs controls could not be lifted.

As a result of the fourth meeting of the Special Representatives, a similar statement was made by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of both countries. Below is the statement made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye:

“Special Representatives for the normalization process between Türkiye and Armenia, Ambassador Serdar Kılıç and Deputy Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Ruben Rubinyan held their fourth meeting today in Vienna.

They agreed to enable the crossing of the land border between Türkiye and Armenia by third-country citizens visiting Türkiye and Armenia respectively at the earliest date possible and decided to initiate the necessary process to that end.

They also agreed on commencing direct air cargo trade between Türkiye and Armenia at the earliest possible date and decided to initiate the necessary process to that effect.

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42 “Rubinyan notes lack of progress in talks with Turkey ahead of Vienna meeting”, *Karabkhspace.eu*, June 20, 2022, <https://karabkhspace.commonspace.eu/news/rubinyan-notes-lack-progress-talks-turkey-ahead-vienna-meeting>

Furthermore, they discussed other possible concrete steps that can be undertaken towards achieving the ultimate goal of full normalization between their respective countries. Finally they reemphasized their agreement to continue the normalization process without preconditions.”<sup>43</sup>

In the Armenian press, it was noted that the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu expressed the following issues regarding the normalization process with Armenia at the joint press conference held on the occasion of the Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs’ visit:

- Türkiye wants the Armenian-Turkish process to continue step-by-step.
- Türkiye “consults and coordinates its actions with Azerbaijan at all stages”.
- Ankara supports the normalization of Armenian-Azerbaijani relations, it is necessary to open the “Zangezuri Corridor”, which should be created on the basis of agreements between Azerbaijan and Armenia, as well as implement other transport projects, because after the Ukrainian war, this corridor became of strategic importance.
- So far, Yerevan is not ready to hold the next rounds of negotiations aimed at the settlement of Armenian-Turkish relations.
- Some circles in Armenia do not want peace in the region and are putting pressure on Yerevan, which is an obstacle to the normalization of relations between Armenia and Türkiye. The pressure does not allow Yerevan to take bold steps towards settlement. We are ready for constructive dialogue. The region needs lasting peace.
- The Armenian Diaspora is divided into two parts. One part categorically does not want to support the settlement process, the other part supports it.
- Some forces in Armenia attack the house of the Prime Minister, carry out street actions and exert serious pressure, and this creates a serious obstacle in the process of normalization of Armenia’s relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

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43 “No: 212, 1 July 2022, Press Release Regarding the Meeting of the Special Representatives for the Normalization Process Between Türkiye and Armenia, Ambassador Serdar Kılıç and Deputy Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Ruben Rubinyan”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye*, July 1, 2022, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-212\\_-turkiye-ve-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcileri-nin-gorushmeleri-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-212_-turkiye-ve-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcileri-nin-gorushmeleri-hk.en.mfa)

In his subsequent statements, Minister Çavuşoğlu reiterated that the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations depends on Armenia's negotiations for a peace agreement with Azerbaijan and opening a highway corridor to Nakhchivan. He noted that, even after four meetings, Armenia did not take any concrete steps in this direction. Çavuşoğlu made similar statements in August, saying that Yerevan needs to stop using the pressure of the Armenian Diaspora and local extremists as an excuse in order not to accept the Turkish-Azerbaijani demands. Regarding the armed conflict that broke out on 13 September on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border, Türkiye firmly sided with Azerbaijan and warned Armenia to end its provocations against Baku. In a speech, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan invited Armenia to immediately turn away from this wrong path it had taken, stated that this policy will undoubtedly have consequences for Armenia and that not only does Armenia not comply with the agreement it has signed, but it is also in a perpetual stance of aggression.

In a statement he made on 7 July after the cabinet meeting, the Minister of Economy of Armenia also touched upon the issue of opening the border with Türkiye and stated; "After the opening of the border, Armenia will turn from a 'dead end' into a 'crossroads.' Naturally, as a result of this, we will have very large economic effects".<sup>44</sup> On the same date, Prime Minister Pashinyan issued a memorandum to the government institutions of Armenia and instructed them to contact and cooperate with the relevant Turkish authorities as soon as possible for the implementation of the agreement reached to open the Turkish-Armenian border to third country citizens. According to a report published in the Armenian press, it was claimed that the Turkish and Armenian authorities planned to conduct a meeting at the border on 14 September, but this meeting was canceled due to the 13 September clashes on the Armenia-Azerbaijan border.

A symbolic development in the normalization process was the telephone conversation between the President of Türkiye and the Prime Minister of Armenia on 11 July. The parties made similar brief statements regarding the context of this conversation. It was the first call between the two leaders where they also congratulated each other for the Sacrifice Feast and Vardavar Holiday. The two leaders underlined the importance of the bilateral process for the normalization of relations between their countries and stated that this would assist the solidifying of peace and stability in the region. The Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul Sahak II and the representatives of the Turkish Armenian community expressed their satisfaction with this development.

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44 "Economy minister: After Turkey border opening Armenia will turn from 'dead end' into 'crossroads'", *News.am*, July 7, 2022, <https://news.am/eng/news/710794.html>

The US, EU, and Russia expressed their content with the normalization process in Türkiye-Armenia relations. The US Department of State stated that they strongly support the normalization process, and that the Turkish-Armenian dialogue has the potential to improve regional stability. The Spokesperson of Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed that they are ready to assist the Turkish-Armenian dialogue and provide all kinds of support and that they believe this is crucial for the stability and economic prosperity of the region.

The gestures in the normalization process continued with mutual messages of condolence. The Turkish Special Representative sent a message of condolence to the Armenian counterpart on 15 August, expressing his sadness due to the explosion that occurred in the center of Yerevan on 14 August, which claimed more than 20 lives. The Special Representative of Armenia sent a message of condolence to his Turkish colleague on 22 August for the traffic accident in Gaziantep and Mardin in which 32 Turkish citizens died. The Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs also sent a message of condolence to the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs Çavuşoğlu on 15 November due to the terrorist bomb attack in Istanbul.

The Armenian lobby in the US continued to escalate its anti-Türkiye activities. One of the four resolutions against Azerbaijan and Türkiye, of which the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) ensured its approval in the US Congress, was in relation to not selling F-16 fighter jets to Türkiye. In September, the Armenian and Greek lobbies decided to cooperate to prevent Turkish-origin Dr. Mehmet Öz from being elected as a US Senator in the by-elections and continued their disruptive campaigns essentially targeting Türkiye and Turks until November. The Governor of the State of California signed a law on 30 September, which has been worked on for a long time by the Armenian lobby, whereby 24 April was declared a public holiday in California as the "Armenian genocide remembrance day".

Despite the normalization process, Armenia remained indifferent within the period to the continuation of activities that fueled hostility towards Türkiye and Turks, and even expedited them with the formation of a trilateral format. With its statement published on 7 September, the Armenian Embassy in Athens commemorated the events of 6-7 September 1955 in a manner that was "more royalist than the king". The "genocide museum-institute" in Yerevan organized a three-day international seminar titled "Smyrna in the context of the Armenian and Greek genocides: annihilation, arson and deportation (September 1922)".

Within the framework of the European Political Community Summit held in Prague on 6 October, the President of Türkiye and the Prime Minister of



Armenia met face to face for the first time.<sup>45</sup> Prior to this bilateral meeting, a conversation took place in the summit hall, in an informal setting, with the participation of the President of Azerbaijan. A brief statement was made from the Armenian government's press office regarding the meeting. Accordingly, the two leaders discussed further steps to be taken in establishing diplomatic relations and opening the common border between their countries. In addition, the subject of implementing the issues agreed by the special representatives as soon as possible was also reviewed. It was also noted that views were exchanged concerning regional developments. No details were given in the statement issued by the Turkish Presidency. It was only stated that the Turkish President had received the Armenian Prime Minister.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, Turkish President Erdoğan also touched upon the issue of Türkiye-Armenia relations at the press conference he held after the summit and said the following:

“Türkiye and Armenia can achieve full normalization on the basis of good neighborly relations. Türkiye-Armenia negotiations are carried out through special representatives. My meeting with Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan took place in a friendly atmosphere. I sincerely believe that we can achieve our goal of full normalization on the basis of good neighborly relations in the region. Türkiye has no preconditions for full normalization. Ankara expects Yerevan and Baku to resolve their own issues and conclude a peace agreement. Ankara wants the relations between Türkiye, Azerbaijan and Armenia to soften and the problems between the parties to be resolved. The foreign ministers and special representatives of the two countries will meet and take matters to a higher level. What I said to Prime Minister Pashinyan was that as soon as we make a peace agreement with Azerbaijan, there will be no problem.”

The opening of a second airport in the liberated lands of Azerbaijan, in Zangilan, after Fuzuli, on 20 October with a ceremony attended by the Presidents of Türkiye and Azerbaijan, had limited coverage in the Armenian press. An attempt was made to cover it with the opening ceremony of the Iranian Consulate General in Kapan, a nearby town.

45 “Erdoğan ile Paşinyan arasında ilk temas: Prag’da bir araya geldiler”, *Cumhuriyet*, 6 Ekim 2022, <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/erdogan-ile-pasinyan-arasinda-ilk-temas-pragda-bir-araya-geldiler-1989357>

46 Mehmet Tosun, “Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Prag’da Ermenistan Başbakanı Paşinyan’ı kabul etti”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 6 Ekim 2022, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-pragda-ermenistan-basbakani-pasinyani-kabul-etti/2704585>

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

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# SULTAN ABDÜLHAMİT II'S ALLEGED ROLE IN THE 1909 ADANA EVENTS

(SULTAN II. ABDÜLHAMİT'İN 1909 ADANA  
OLAYLARINDA İDDİA EDİLEN ROLÜ)

Murat KÖYLÜ\*

**Abstract:** *For Armenians, Adana became a symbol of a sacred and national cause to build Cilicia Armenia by attaining the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia, a former Armenian state of historical importance, and gathering the Armenian people scattered in Anatolia in this region. The Sis Catholicosate, one of the most important religious centers for Armenians, was also located in this region. The “Armenian national awakening movement” was initiated with the support of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM), which had carried out missionary activities especially in the eastern and southern Anatolian regions since 1830. The Armenian nationalists, who could not find the support they expected from the Great Powers of the period for their demands of establishing Armenia in the “Six Provinces” of Anatolia, followed a similar path to the policy of the Balkan countries who seceded from the Ottoman Empire after the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. Through the terrorist organizations they established, the said nationalists started to attract the attention of the Christian public opinion by instigating revolts in the region. The biggest obstacle in front of Armenian ideals and aspirations was the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamit II. With the measures he*

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took in 1890, Abdülhamit II to a large extent prevented the revolts from spreading and the Armenian nationalists from reaching their goals. Abdülhamit II's Islamist policies and the methods he used in suppressing the revolts were used by the Christian missionaries in Anatolia to relay exaggerated descriptions of a "Christian Massacre" to the Western public, which made him known as the "Red Sultan" in a short time. Abdülhamit II was portrayed as a blood-drinking monster in the Western media, cartoons and articles were prepared in line with this portrayal. Armenian separatists, in cooperation with the members of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) who were against Abdülhamit II, accelerated the insurrectionary activities until the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy in 1908, and took advantage of the turmoil in the Balkan countries to start a new revolt. Especially with a revolt they started in this region, the intervention of the Western public would be ensured, and an Armenia would be established in the Cilicia region by the landing of foreign soldiers in Mersin. The events that started with the murder of two Turkish youngsters by Armenians on 27 March 1909 turned into a revolt after spreading on 13-14 April, and thousands of people were killed on both sides, the exact number of which is not known. In the reports sent to the Western media by ABCFM missionaries who were in the region during the revolt, an effort was made to portray the violence experienced in the revolt as "a planned massacre of Sultan Abdülhamit II". The simultaneousness of the Adana events with the reactionary uprising in Istanbul brought about the debates on whether the Sultan was responsible for the Adana events. This study aims to analyze the role of Sultan Abdülhamit II in the Adana events based on the testimonies of the witnesses of the period.

**Keywords:** Adana, Events, Allegations, Role, Abdülhamit II, Armenians

**Öz:** Ermeniler için Adana; tarihsel önemi ve geçmişte kurdukları hükümlerlik olan Kilikya Ermeni Krallığı'na ulaşarak, Anadolu'da dağınık bulunan Ermeni halkını bu bölgede toplayarak Kilikya Ermenistan'ını inşa etme isteği sebebiyle kutsal ve milli bir davanın sembolü olmuştur. Ermeniler için dini merkezlerden ve en önemlilerinden biri olan Sis Katolikosluğu da bu bölgede bulunuyordu. 1830'dan itibaren özellikle Doğu ve Güney Anadolu bölgelerinde misyonerlik faaliyetlerini başlatan Dış Misyonerlikler için Amerikan Komiserler Kurulu'nun (ABCFM) desteği ile "Ermeni milli uyanış hareketinin" başlatılmıştı. 1878 Berlin Anlaşması'nda Anadolu'da "Vilayet-i Sitte'de" kurmak istedikleri Ermenistan istekleri dönemin büyük devletlerinde beklemedikleri desteği göremeyen Ermeni milliyetçileri, Balkan ülkelerinin Osmanlı'dan ayrılmak için uyguladıkları siyasete benzer bir yol izlediler. Söz konusu milliyetçiler kurdukları tedhiş örgütleri vasıtasıyla bölgede isyanlar çıkararak, Hristiyan kamuoyunun dikkatini çekmeye başlamışlardır. Ermeni ideal ve isteklerinin önündeki en büyük engel olan Sultan II. Abdülhamit, 1890

yılından itibaren aldığı önlemlerle isyanların yaygınlaşmasını ve amaçlarına ulaşmasını büyük ölçüde önlemiştir. II. Abdülhamit'in İslamcı bir siyaset izlemesi ve isyanların bastırılmasında kullandığı yöntemler, Anadolu'daki Hristiyan misyonerler tarafından Batı kamuoyuna abartılı olarak "Hristiyan Katliamı" olarak anlatılması kısa zamanda onun "Kızıl Sultan" olarak isim yapmasına, Batı medyasında kendisini kan içen bir canavar gibi gösteren karikatürlerin çizilmesine ve yazıların yazılmasına neden olmuştur. Ermeni ayrılıkçılar, II. Abdülhamit karşıtı olan İttihat ve Terakki üyeleri ile iş birliği yaparak 1908 Meşrutiyet'in ilanına kadar komite faaliyetlerini hızlandırarak, özellikle Balkan ülkelerindeki karışıklıklardan faydalanarak yeni bir isyan hazırlığı içine girmişlerdir. Özellikle bu bölgede başlatacakları bir isyanla, Batı kamuoyunun müdahalesi sağlanacak ve Mersin'e asker çıkartılarak Kilikya bölgesinde bir Ermenistan kurulabilecekti. 27 Mart 1909 günü önce iki Türk gencinin Ermeniler tarafından öldürülmesi ile başlayan olaylar 13-14 Nisan'da yaygınlaşarak isyana dönüşmüş ve sayısı tam olarak bilinmemekle, her iki taraftan binlerce insan öldürülmüştür. İsyan süresince bölgede bulunan ABCFM misyonerlerinin Batı medyasına gönderdiği raporlarda isyanı "Sultan II. Abdülhamit'in planlı bir katliam hareketi" olarak göstermeye çalışmaları, Adana olaylarının İstanbul'daki gerici ayaklanma ile eş zamanlı olması, Sultanın Adana olaylarında sorumluluğu olup olmadığı tartışmalarını da gündeme taşımıştır. Çalışmanın amacı, Sultan II. Abdülhamit'in Adana olaylarındaki rolünü dönemin tanıklarının ifadelerine dayanarak analiz etmektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Adana, Olaylar, İddialar, Rol, II. Abdülhamit, Ermeniler

## Introduction

The prominent argument of the circles advocating for the existence of “the Armenian Genocide” is that the relocation decision of the Ottoman state, part of a supposed plan to eliminate the Armenians, was brought to its final stage by taking advantage of the environment created by the First World War. According to this argument, which is based on the continuity of violence against Armenians, the events in Eastern Anatolia during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamit II, and the relocations during the First World War prove that the Ottoman state had implemented a systematic and long-term plan to eradicate Armenians. The events in Çukurova/Adana in 1909 are the crux of this argument by pro-Armenian authors.

The historiography advocating the “Armenian Genocide” states that the events of 1909 were a planned massacre and “genocide rehearsal” against Armenians, and were an integral part of the process from the 1890s to 1915. This interpretation claims that the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), who are considered to be responsible for the 1915 events, were neither sincere nor determined about the constitutional regime from the very beginning, and that the Armenian organizations were right to distrust the constitutional regime and to plan for armed actions.<sup>1</sup>

The response of the opposing side to these allegations by those advocating the existence of the “Armenian Genocide” has been to place the Adana events in a similar meta-narrative. Accordingly, just like the Armenian rebellions that started in the 1890s and the Armenian armed uprisings, which were seen as a justification for the 1915 relocation, the Adana events of 1909 were planned by Armenian organizations and were an attempt to ensure foreign intervention in the region. According to this interpretation, the Adana events showed the insincerity of the Armenian organizations about the desire to live together with the Muslims within the framework of the constitutional regime and their aim to establish an independent Armenian state by taking advantage of the freedoms brought by the new regime.<sup>2</sup> The common point of these two contradictory interpretations is that they show what happened in 1909 as a forerunner of what happened in 1915, in other words, 1915 as the natural and inevitable extension of 1909.

On the other hand, the interpretations that consider the Adana events as “massacre” in this context became generally accepted theses only after 1915. For those who defend the genocide thesis and Armenian nationalists, these

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1 Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 179-183.

2 Esat Uras, *Tarihte Ermeniler ve Ermeni Meselesi* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınları, 1987), 550-568 ; Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi IX. Cilt* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1996), 93-96.

events were used to reinforce the genocide claim, as well as to strengthen Armenian national identity, which was reshaped and homogenized after the war through the claim of the sacrifice of the Çukurova Armenians.<sup>3</sup>

Although examples of interpretations presenting the events of 1909 as an Armenian revolt or planned massacre can be seen before 1915, these are mostly those who took part in the events and needed to defend their own position, and were more keenly in political rivalry with the mainstream parties of the period, CUP and the Dashnaks. They were thus produced by those who adopted a position as a political strategy.<sup>4</sup>

The interpretation, which was generally accepted immediately after the events and was accepted as an official thesis at least until 1915, is very different. This thesis, defended by the CUP and the Dashnaks, attributes the actual responsibility of the violence to some radicals from both sides, but argues that the main reason underlying the events is “reactionism”.

According to this thesis, the Adana events were the local extension of the 31 March Incident in Istanbul and were under the political responsibility of Abdülhamit II. According to the claims of those who defend this thesis, although a similar massacre of Armenians was planned in Istanbul, it was prevented at the last moment by the intervention of the Action Army (*Hareket Ordusu*).<sup>5</sup>

### 1. About Sultan Abdülhamit II

Sultan Abdülhamit II, the 34th ruler of the Ottoman Empire (1876-1909), is one of the most controversial figures in the empire's political history. Praised and criticized in almost equal measure, usually determined by one's ideological worldview, his alleged role in the 1909 Adana Events continues to add fuel to the fire of this debate. Yücel Güçlü has provided a very informative summary of what kind a person Abdülhamit II was and the controversy surrounding him. This summary is reproduced below:

“There is little consensus regarding the character or the nature of conduct of Sultan Abdülhamid II. In fact, his name has elicited reactions that range from harsh scorn to profound gratitude. On the one hand he has been praised as a clear-headed, far-sighted statesman, with an

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3 Vahe Tachjian, “Adana Ermenileri: Milliyetçi İdeolojilere Ters Düşen Farklı Bir Kimlik”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, (191/Kasım 2009), 58-69.

4 Sarkis Atamian, *The Armenian Community* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), 173, 175.

5 FO 421/251, *Further Correspondence Respecting the Affairs of South-Eastern Europe* (May and June 1909), 145.

unbounded capacity for hard work and a strong interest in what he held to be the true welfare of his subjects. Under his rule the Ottoman Empire was arguably in a stronger strategic position than it had been in decades. Railways, telegraphs, and paved all-weather roads were beginning to unite the empire, improving communications with provincial authorities while giving a solid spur to internal trade. By the turn of the twentieth century, over eight hundred kilometers of new roads were being laid every year, and another four hundred and fifty kilometers repaired. While the empire still ran a large trade deficit with Europe in manufactured goods, Ottoman exports of foodstuffs, cotton, silk, carpets, tiles, and glass, along with coal and certain increasingly strategic metals like chrome, borax, and manganese, were booming in turn. He was quietly supporting the expansion of European-style education in the empire. Eighteen new professional colleges were established during his reign, teaching subjects like French, composition, geography, statistics, economics, and commercial, civil, and international law. Hundreds of new state schools were being built across the empire, along with new public libraries serving an increasingly literate urban population. The number of students attending secondary schools with a secular curriculum doubled in the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Sultan Abdülhamid II's life was one of incessant labor. He devoted himself most assiduously to the work of his great office. He was absolute master of his ministers and of his state. His fez and Western coat testified to his ambition to modernize his empire. His idea of the modern was order, stability, and centralized power. He loved opera and carpentry, making much of his furniture in the Yıldız Palace. On the other hand, he has been denounced in unmeasured terms as a loathsome, cowardly tyrant, with his hands dipped in the blood of his subjects, lacking in all moral sense and working with a sort of low cunning merely to maintain himself on the throne regardless of the impending ruin of his empire. Western politicians, publicists, and cartoonists, under strong impressions of the massacre of Armenians in the 1890s, have seen him not only as a despot but as the "red sultan." From the testimony of all who came in contact with him, Sultan Abdülhamid II appeared reserved, polite, always affable, with a lively intellect and a certain charm of personality which fascinated everyone who approached him. Rather timid by nature, he was a man of extreme tenacity of purpose and determination of will."<sup>6</sup>

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6 Yücel Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909: Cemal Pasa and Beyond* (London: Hamilton Books, 2018), 220-221.

## 2. The 1909 Adana Events

On the basis of these events, it is claimed that the Ottoman government planned eliminate the Armenians who were claiming that their lands were unjustly confiscated during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamit II.<sup>7</sup> However, when examined carefully, it will be seen that this argument is not explanatory about the violence in Çukurova. The weakest point of this argument is that although there were occasional territorial disputes in Çukurova, which were based on the pre-constitutional situation, when compared to other provinces where Armenians were settled, Çukurova was among the places where such conflicts were experienced the least.<sup>8</sup> As a matter of fact, Çukurova was not one of the focal points of the Armenian migrations abroad in the 1890s, which had not caused such conflicts. For this very reason, the Çukurova region was not included in the reform bill submitted by the government to the parliament in February 1909, including the resolution of land disputes, and the Armenian deputies did not bring up such an issue.<sup>9</sup>

Cotton production in Çukurova experienced a rapid increase, especially in the first decade of the twentieth century. While 40,000 bales of 200 kg cotton were produced in the region in 1903, this figure reached 50,000 in 1906, 60,000 in 1907, and 75,000 in 1908, that is to say, it almost doubled in five years.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, this rapid increase in cotton production in the early twentieth century made the region increasingly dependent on seasonal migrant workers from neighboring provinces for both harvesting and hoeing.

From this framework, disgruntlement would be seen in 1909 when a series of factors come together in a short time. The first was the drought and famine that lasted from 1905 until 1908, especially in the interior of Anatolia.<sup>11</sup> This process, which was the first great famine since the one in 1873-74, caused the loss of farm animals which were raised by some of the Anatolian villagers.<sup>12</sup> No matter how much the government and local peoples tried to remedy the situation, these efforts proved insufficient.

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7 Hrachik Simonyan, *The Destruction of Armenians in Cilicia April 1909* (London Gomidas Institute, 2012), 27-28, 31.

8 Foreign Office. Turkey No. 1 (1898), Further Correspondence respecting the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey: in continuation of "Turkey No. 7 (1897)"- C. 8395 (London: Harrison and Sons, 1898), 153-154.

9 MM 1/1/L- *Meclis-i Mebusan Levayih ve Tekalif-i Kanuniyye ve Encümen Mazbataları*. Devre: 1, İçtima Senesi: 1. Sene 1324-1325 (Ankara: T.B.M.M. Basımevi, 1992), 108-111.

10 W.F. Bruck, *Vorläufiger Bericht über Baumwoll-erzeugung und Verbrauch in der Türkei* (Augsburg-Berlin, 1917), 13.

11 Muammer Demirel, *İkinci Meşrutiyet Öncesi Erzurum'da Halk Hareketleri* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1990), 9.

12 The British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey, *Trade Journal*, No 1- 15th March 1908.

The second factor was the increase of labor in Anatolia. While the demobilization of a significant part of the army after the proclamation of the constitutional monarchy in July 1908 caused many young people to join the labor force, many Ottoman subjects from abroad had returned to the country in the same period too. During this period, especially during the reign of Abdülhamit II, Armenians who were not allowed to enter the country for security reasons, and who were mostly in the United States and Transcaucasia, returned to their homeland in masse in the autumn of 1908.<sup>13</sup>

Although the Armenians returning from the US were able to accumulate a certain amount of capital during their stay abroad, the same was not the case for the Armenians returning from Transcaucasia, as they were exposed to the oppression of the Tsarist Russian government and the violence during the internal turmoil in 1905-1906. When this group returned to the Ottoman lands, it was in a needy situation.<sup>14</sup>

The third factor was the lifting of the travel ban for Istanbul in connection with the proclamation of the constitutional monarchy. In the previous period, it was difficult and expensive for both Turks and Armenians to obtain travel permits to and from Istanbul, but as of July 1908, this obligation was lifted, and Ottoman subjects had the opportunity to travel within the country to Istanbul without any permission.

With the combination of all these factors, starting from the autumn of 1908, an increasing number of people flocked to the cities and agricultural basins where job opportunities were available. For example, people returning from Transcaucasia and coming from Anatolia had caused serious unemployment and disorder in Istanbul. The effects of this rapid increase in labor supply throughout Anatolia was also seen in Çukurova in the spring of 1909.<sup>15</sup>

The month of April, when the Adana events took place, stood out as a time when Çukurova was filled with labor migration every year. The most important labor movement in Adana was the harvest season, which started in February and lasted until May.<sup>16</sup> While the number of migrant workers who came to Çukurova is given as 30,000, a source about the Ottoman period mentions 50,000 migrant workers, 20,000 of whom were Armenians.<sup>17</sup>

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13 Armen Garo, *Armen Garo'nun Anıları* (İstanbul: Belge Yayınevi, 2009), 201.

14 Garine Narzakian (ed.), *Memoirs of Sarkis Narzakian* (Ann Arbor, MI: Gomidas Institute, 1995), 143.

15 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 222.

16 Hilmi Uran, *Meşrutiyet, Tek Parti, Çok Parti Hatıralarım (1908-1950)* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2008), 569-570.

17 Duckett Z. Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about the Holocaust at Adana in Asia Minor, during April 1909* (London: 1913), 81.

The role played by the Armenian deputy named Bishop Musheg was important here. Musheg had influence among government officials, and managed to place a large number of Armenian migrants (in the appearance of seasonal workers), brought from the surrounding provinces of Adana, in vacant lands, in houses in the city, and nearby villages, and armed them. The inadequacy and weakness of the government officials in the region was apparent, as they were unable to detect the insurrectionary preparations of Musheg and the Hunchak and Dashnak organizations.

There was a lot of evidence that migrant workers played the leading role in the Adana events of April 1909. One day before the mass violence started, the murder of two Muslims by an Armenian who supposedly provoked the events, took place on Tuesday, 13 April, the day of the labor market.<sup>18</sup> The narratives about 14 April, when the events began, draw attention to the fact that a large crowd still roamed the streets of the city despite the end of the labor market. Although some pro-Armenian writers claimed that this crowd stayed in the city on orders to commit massacres, it is highly probable that they were workers who stayed in the city because they could not find a job in the labor market.<sup>19</sup>

The first spark of the events, the shooting of two Muslim youths by an Armenian on Friday, 9 April 1909, increased the tension between Turks and Armenians in Adana. While the Muslims wanted the government to take away the murderer from the Armenians, the Armenians wanted a Muslim who had killed an Armenian before to be handed over to them. Otherwise, they said that they would not hand over the murderer to the authorities. Then, the government tried to apprehend the murderer, but they were unsuccessful.<sup>20</sup> After one of the Armenians killed a Muslim named Imamzade Nuri Efendi, the events that devastated the Adana Province began around 4 pm on 13 April.<sup>21</sup>

Mutual killings that started in Adana center on Wednesday continued until the evening and continued the next Thursday as well. With the massacres in the city, looting started, a fire broke out, and three-fifths of Adana was destroyed. As a result of the recurring violence on 25 April, Adana was utterly devastated.<sup>22</sup>

While the British consul in Adana was visiting the city, he wanted to see the Armenian neighborhoods and understand the situation of the Armenians. Even

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18 S. Soskin, "Die Baumwollkultur in der Kilikischen Ebene und ihre Ausdehnungsmöglichkeit hier sowie in Nordsyrien". *Der Tropenpflanzer*: 19. Jahrgang (Berlin Mai: 1916. Nr. 5. (255-272), 264.

19 Ferriman, *The Young Turks and the Truth about*, 22.

20 Bayram Kodaman ve Mehmet Ali Ünal, *Son vak'anüvis Abdurrahman Şeref Efendi Tarihi: II. Meşrutiyet olayları (1908-1909)* (Ankara: TTK Yayınevi, 1996), 94.

21 BEO., 3621/271523 (Quoted by Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 223-224).

22 BEO., 3621/271523 (Quoted by Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 223-224).



though he was accompanied by the gendarmerie commander, a few cavalymen, and thirty soldiers; the Armenians shot at the soldiers while walking in the Armenian quarter, and the consul was shot in the arm while trying to warn the Armenians not to shoot. Luckily, his wound was not serious. The British consul had personally witnessed the Armenians shooting the Turkish soldiers, and pouring kerosene on them and burning them.<sup>23</sup>

The Ottoman Ministry of War ordered the 5th Army Command to send various military units to the region of Adana to prevent the events from spreading and to ensure security.<sup>24</sup> It was decided to urgently send military units to Mersin from the Gallipoli and 2nd Army region and Ministry of War requested ferries to take the military troops.<sup>25</sup> The Governor Cevat Bey was dismissed from his post, and Mustafa Zihni Pasha, the Governor of Burdur, was appointed instead. Commander Ferik Remzi Pasha was also dismissed from his post. Government officials began to confiscate all the weapons in the hands of the people in Adana, regardless of religion and sect.<sup>26</sup>

In the events that took place in Adana, a total of 15 people, 9 Muslims, and 6 non-Muslims, were sentenced to death and 6 people were sentenced to hard labor for 15 years.<sup>27</sup>

It was not easy to determine the number of people killed and injured during the violence; as such the given figures are not exact. There have been many speculations about the number of deaths and the figures provided by Turks, Armenians, and foreign sources are very different.<sup>28</sup> Adana Governor Mustafa Zihni Pasha gave detailed information about those who died and were injured in the events in his telegram dated 25 April 1325, which he sent to the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Mustafa Zihni Pasha stated that a total of 1924 deaths and 533 injuries from Muslims, 1455 deaths and 382 injuries from non-Muslims occurred during the Adana events, and that the claims that 20,000 or 30,000 Armenians died during the events could not be true, due to the total Armenian population in Adana being 48,477.<sup>29</sup>

Deputy Agop Babikyan, a member of the Investigation Committee established to investigate the Adana events, claimed that 20,008 people were killed all over the province, 620 of them were Muslims and the remaining 19,400 were non-

23 BEO., 3536/265166 (Quoted by Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 223-224).

24 BEO., 3534/264992 (Quoted by Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 223-224).

25 BEO., 3535/265099 (Quoted by Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 223-224).

26 *Takvim-i Vekayi*, No: 207, 11 Mayıs 1909.

27 BEO, 3568/267534; BEO, 3568/267600.

28 Salahi R. Sonyel, *İngiliz Gizli Belgelerine Göre Adana'da Vuku Bulan Türk-Ermeni Olayları (Temmuz 1908-Aralık 1909)* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 2014), 38.

29 DH. MKT, 2807/40.

Muslims.<sup>30</sup> On the other hand, Faik Bey, another member of the committee, declared that the total loss of Muslim, Christian, and general deaths from the people of Adana was about 6000 and that the claimed amount of 20,000 or 30,000 was definitely not true.<sup>31</sup>

### 3. The Allegations About Sultan Abdülhamit II's Role in the Adana Events

Among the newspapers controlled by the CUP was the widely read *Tanin*. The words of its respected editor Hüseyin Cahit regarding the Adana events had a significant impact on the reporting of the events by other publications. Cahit wrote the following on these events:

“The province of Adana has been the scene of terribly tragic events. Men, women, and children were massacred mercilessly with savage fury. Nearly 20,000 of our citizens have perished. Whole families have disappeared. The orphans are many. Humanity in its entirety has trembled with horror before this plight. The Adana tragedy, the last spasm of Absolutism, stretches as far as İstanbul. [...] We understand the silence of Abdülhamit in front of the evils he perpetrated, but we cannot interpret the government's silence on the result of the inquiry.”<sup>32</sup>

British journalist Sir Edwin Pears, using a supposedly well-informed local correspondent, claimed that “it is believed that throughout the provinces of Asia Abdulhamid instructed high officials to exterminate the Christians”,<sup>33</sup> and claimed:

“It was a terrible success there (in Adana) and was contemporaneous within the capital. Elsewhere the reactionaries waited to see which side in Constantinople would win; and when, in less than a fortnight, the result showed the powerlessness of the Sultan, no further attempt at reaction took place. Amid some problems which are still unsolved, it cannot be doubted that there was a deliberate attempt to raise Anatolia against the new regime.”<sup>34</sup>

American journalist James Creelman also blamed Abdülhamit II, stating he had ordered the massacre of Armenians in Asia Minor:

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30 *Tasvir-i Efkar*, No: 39, 8 Temmuz 1909.

31 *Yeni Tasvir-i Efkar*, No: 43, 12 Temmuz 1909.

32 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 222-223.

33 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 224.

34 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 224.

“Creelman believed that it was not a religious movement at all, but a political plot hatched out in Yıldız Palace. There were hundreds of men in the lower orders of Islam, who wore the turban badge of religious vocation- engaged in the conspiracy, but there was abundant evidence to show that the real leaders of the Muslim faith had nothing to do with it.”<sup>35</sup>

Other people opposed such claims, however. British author Charles Woods indicated that he had encountered a supposed telegram from Abdülhamit II instructing the Adana Governor to “zealously kill Christians”. Woods contended that “there is no proof that such a telegram was ever sent to Adana from [İstanbul], and if it were transmitted, no evidence has been produced that its dispatch was authorized by Sultan Abdülhamid II.”<sup>36</sup> Further adding weight to his argument, Woods indicated:

“it was impossible for those intimately acquainted with the condition of affairs in the Ottoman Empire between July 1908 and April 1909 to believe that during the closing months of his reign Sultan Abdülhamid II was actually in a position to send any direct or secret orders to the governmental authorities in the provinces.”<sup>37</sup>

The German writer Wendland of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* newspaper argued that it was local political rivalries, not Abdülhamit II’s intrigues or an outburst of Muslim extremism that led to the violence in the Adana events. Indicating that Adana was like a powder keg ready to explode, Wendland added:

“The Armenian agitators, who had made many pecuniary sacrifices to aid in the bringing of the new Constitution, expected to exercise a vital political influence through its operation, and their elated bearing was such as to exasperate the Mohammedans. The leaders of this agitation were generally foreign members of the Armenia committee or certain stirrers up of race hatred in Adana. While these leaders took care to secure safety for themselves, they proved the ruin of their poorer fellow countrymen, who were sacrificed by thousands for no fault of their own.

[...]

It may easily be imagined that this new awakening of national Chauvinism [among Armenians] was soon perceived by the

35 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 225.

36 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 226.

37 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 226.

38 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 226-227.

## Sultan Abdülhamit II's Alleged Role in the 1909 Adana Events

Mohammedans and while the Armenians were giving too free a rein to their tongue and their enthusiasm, the Mohammedan authorities were kept fully informed by Turkish spies. It is therefore a gross error to declare that religious fanaticism was responsible for the late massacres.”<sup>38</sup>

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) and Antep’s medical missionary, Fred Douglas Shepard, going against the exaggerated reports of many other missionaries working in the Ottoman Empire, argued that:

“[...] Armenians, intoxicated with the new wine of freedom, were often offended by wild speech or arrogant behavior. The Bishop of Adana openly advised his people to take up arms, and many of the youth bought guns and carried them ostentatiously. The Muslim public was quickly persuaded by the exaggerated news about the treacherous plans of the Armenians, and thus Everything was ready when the news came that, Sultan II. Abdulhamid had taken the reins and came back to power.”<sup>39</sup>

There were also those who occupied a sort of middle ground in terms of the assessment of the Adana events. For example, the aforementioned deputy Agop Babikyan, one of the members of the investigative committee, summarized his findings as follows:

“I have not been able to secure a single document in evidence of Abdul Hamid having any finger in the whole affair of Adana. [...] On the other hand the local government has been an accomplice in the massacres, and even the central government is guilty of carelessness and prompt action.”<sup>40</sup>

It is apparent that the assessments of the Adana events by the contemporaries of that time and their views on Abdülhamit II’s alleged role demonstrates parallels with the heated contemporary debate concerning Abdülhamit II’s personality and legacy. It can be confidently stated, however, that it is simply not possible to convincingly argue that Abdülhamit II ordered or orchestrated violence against Armenians during the Adana events.

### Evaluation and Conclusion

After the re-proclamation of constitution in 1908, Armenian nationalists indulged in wild and provocative discourse: they talked openly of Armenian

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39 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 228.

40 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 228.

independence (possibly of Cilicia as a self-governing principality) and preached the duty of revenge against Turks.<sup>41</sup> This was not the first Armenian attempt to establish an independent principality. After the 1876-1877 Ottoman-Russian War and the disintegration process of the Ottoman Empire that started with great land losses, the Armenian nationalists started the independence movement by organizing terrorist acts in Eastern and Southern Anatolia with the illegal organizations they established in the empire and the revolts they started. The basis of this initiative, which took the independence movements of the countries in the Balkans as an example, was “religious brotherhood solidarity”. Especially since 1830, the schools and aid organizations established by American missionaries in Anatolia where the Armenian population was densely populated contributed greatly to the Armenian national movement’s expansion.

As of 1830, American missionaries sent by the ABCFM had active presence in Cilicia of the Adana province. The Bible used in schools was printed in Turkish and transcribed in the Armenian script by these missionaries.<sup>42</sup>

After years of propaganda, the Christians in Cilicia, as in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, bought arms in quantities exaggerated by the fear of the Muslims. Similarly, reports were circulated that the Muslim faith was threatened and that the Christians were preparing to rise against the Muslims. There were plenty of people to fan the anxieties on both sides. It was evident that the spirit of antagonism between Muslims and Christians was increasing. Fuel was added to the fire by the open boasts of some Armenians that they were arming themselves and speaking abusively of Muslims.

Additionally in April 1909, the concentration of seasonal Christian workers coming to the Adana region from various parts of Anatolia, especially from Transcaucasia, gave rise to the thought that a revolt would have a high chance of success.

On the other hand, the revolt initiated by the CUP, which had acted together with the Armenian nationalists just ten months ago, in the Balkans had succeeded, and Sultan Abdülhamit II was forced to re-enact the constitution. The weakening of the authority of Abdülhamit II and the CUP, which the Armenians saw as the biggest obstacle<sup>43</sup> to their goals, would increase the chances of success for the revolt they would initiate in the Adana region.

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41 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 230-231.

42 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 231.

43 Güçlü, *The Armenian Events of Adana in 1909*, 231.

Likewise, especially since the late 1890s, the Dashnak and the Hunchak organizations, who could not carry out work in Anatolia due to the effective efforts of Abdülhamit II and whose activities were almost completely limited to foreign organizations, were now on the rise in the region.

The excuse they used in their efforts to turn the Adana events into a “massacre” was the “31 March Incident”. The justification of those who defend this thesis is that the main reason behind the events is the claim that it was reactionism supported by Abdülhamit II. According to this thesis, Adana events were an extension of the locality of the March 31 Incident in Istanbul and were under the political responsibility of Abdülhamit II. According to the claims of those who defend this thesis, although a similar massacre of Armenians was planned in Istanbul, this had been prevented at the last moment by the intervention of the Action Army.<sup>44</sup> However, after the proclamation of the Constitutional Monarchy, most of the bureaucrats and commanders affiliated with the old regime were dismissed and the opportunity of Yıldız Palace to penetrate the countryside was eliminated.

As a result of linking the Adana events with the 31 March Incident, the CUP showed themselves as the protectors of the constitutional regime, as well as the security of life and property of the Armenians against the “reactionaries”. The aim of this was to gain prestige for the CUP in the eyes of foreign states and among Armenian voters. This strategy was partially successful.<sup>45</sup>

After both events (31 March and Adana Events), the CUP dethroned Sultan Abdülhamit II, whom they held responsible, sent him into exile in Thessaloniki, and replaced him with his brother, Sultan Mehmet Reşat V, on the throne.

As a result, the revolt started with the illegal Armenian organizations, which dreamt of establishing an independent Armenian Principality of Cilicia, taking advantage of the weakness of the public authority and purposefully fueling the hatred of the Armenian people in the region, resulted in a great disaster. The articles published in local newspapers before the events and some thoughtless behavior of the youth undoubtedly increased the tension between Muslims and Armenians. Perhaps much more decisive than these was the deterioration of the bureaucratic hierarchy after the constitutional monarchy and the inability of the civil and military chiefs to intervene in the events due to the demobilization of the army.

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44 FO 421/251 *Further Correspondence Respecting The Affairs of South-Eastern Europe*. May and June 1909, 145.

45 Arsen Avagyan, “İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti ile Ermeni Siyasi Partileri Arasındaki İlişkiler”, *Ermeniler ve İttihat ve Terakki* (İstanbul: Aras Yayıncılık, 2005), (11-141), 76.

After the events, as they did after every revolt, nationalist Armenian organizations spread the propaganda that the Ottoman government destroyed their fellow Armenians, when in fact it was these same organizations that armed the Armenians and sent to death to gain the support of the western Christian public opinion. They did not hesitate to accuse Abdülhamit II for all the blame, whom they saw as the biggest obstacle to their aim, even though they had no real evidence.

Before and after the constitutional monarchy, the Armenian nationalists were in alliance with the CUP against their common enemy, Sultan Abdülhamit II. These alliances, which lasted until after the 1912 elections, fell apart after the scenario they devised in 1915 led to a catastrophe, and Armenian assassins linked to these nationalists eventually killed all the CUP administrators. It can be thus said that the machinations devised for 1909 created a trail of blood that went to 1915 and beyond.

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## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

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# SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUGGLE CONCERNING THE RUSSIAN LANGUAGE IN ARMENIA

(ERMENİSTAN'DA RUS DİLİ HAKKINDAKİ  
SOSYO-POLİTİK MÜCADELE)

Günel MUSAYEVA\*

**Abstract:** *In the republics of the former USSR, Russian language is known for its prestigious and official status. Unlike the other republics, Armenian was the state language in Armenia back in the Soviet times. Armenia, which gained its independence from the USSR in 1991, began a complete monopoly of the Armenian language in all areas. Even though the majority of the population of Armenia is closely connected with Russia, with each passing year, the Russian language is being increasingly marginalized in the country. Political circles in Armenia are not interested in the promotion of the Russian language and culture in Armenia, which is primarily a manifestation of racial and ethnic discrimination. They perceive Russian as the language of an exceptionally small ethnic minority. This is also a violation of the requirements of the allied strategy between Russia and Armenia. Taking into account all these factors, the article examines the current situation of the Russian language in Armenia and analyzes the measures taken by the government in this area.*

**Keywords:** Russian, language, Armenia, law, struggle, policy

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**Öz:** Eski SSCB cumhuriyetlerinde Rus dili prestijli ve resmi statüsü ile bilinir. Diğer cumhuriyetlerin aksine Ermenice, Sovyet döneminde Ermenistan'da devlet diliydi. 1991 yılında SSCB'den bağımsızlığını kazanan Ermenistan, Ermeni dilinin her alanda tam bir tekel konumuna gelmesi sürecini başlatmıştır. Ermenistan nüfusunun çoğunluğunun Rusya ile yakından bağlantılı olmasına rağmen, Rus dili her yıl ülkede giderek daha fazla kenara itilmektedir. Ermenistan'daki siyasi çevreler, öncelikle ırk ve etnik ayrımcılığın bir tezahürü olarak Ermenistan'daki Rus dili ve kültürünün teşvik edilmesiyle ilgilenmemektedir. Bu çevreler Rusçayı son derece küçük bir etnik azınlığın dili olarak algılamaktadır. Bu ise aynı zamanda Rusya ve Ermenistan arasındaki müttefik stratejisinin gerekliliklerinin de ihlalidir. Makale, tüm bu faktörleri göz önünde bulundurarak Ermenistan'da Rus dilinin mevcut durumunu incelemekte ve hükümetin bu alanda aldığı önlemleri analiz etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Rusça, dil, Ermenistan, kanun, mücadele, politika

### Introduction

The number of speakers in Russian (258 million people) ranks eighth in the world after English, Chinese, Hindi, Spanish, French, Arabic, and Bengali. At the same time, in terms of the degree of prevalence in the global language space, the Russian language is surpassed only by French, English, and Indonesian.<sup>1</sup>

The Russian language in Armenia is the second most widely spoken after the Armenian language. Moreover, the main native speakers of the language are ethnic Armenians - immigrants from Russia or other republics of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and Armenians who received Russian education in Armenia.

The issue of the Russian language has always been an extremely sensitive topic for Armenians. Back in Soviet times, Armenia and Georgia, unlike other union republics, refused to make Russian the state language in their legislation. According to the Constitution of the Armenian SSR of 1978, Armenian was the only state language, and its use was ensured in state and public bodies, in institutions of culture, education and others.<sup>2</sup> All state affairs were conducted exclusively in Armenian.

### 1. Russian language in the education system of Armenia

After Armenia gained independence, on April 17, 1993, the government adopted a tough law titled “On Language”, which established a complete monopoly of the Armenian language in all areas. This concerned both the state and the public in terms of education. The law strictly stated that in the current educational system, the literary Armenian language is the language of teaching and education.<sup>3</sup> After that, Russian schools were closed in Armenia, and the Russian language was only taught in schools as a foreign subject. A year after this law came into force, out of eight dozen schools with the Russian language of instruction, not a single one remained in Armenia; they were all transformed into the Armenian language of instruction (although, as noted, Russian classes were preserved in schools - for children of minorities and children from mixed marriages). Only Russian schools and educational institutions for the children

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1 V. Yegorov and V. Shtol, “Русский язык в глобальном лингвокультурном пространстве”, *Международная жизнь*, 2022 V: p. 74.

2 “Конституция Армянской Советской Социалистической Республики (14 апреля 1978 г.)”, *Nodussr.ru*, accessed October 12, 2020, <https://nodussr.ru/konstituciya-armyanskoj-ssr>

3 “The law of the Republic of Armenia on language, 1993”, *National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia*, accessed December 5, 2020, <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=1793&lang=eng>

of military personnel operated, which were subordinate to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

Changes then affected not only the sphere of education. All office work in the country was translated into Armenian. The circulation of Russian-language newspapers declined markedly. On television and radio, the number of hours of broadcasting was sharply limited by law. The results of such measures were not long in coming: the level of Russian language proficiency dropped sharply in Armenia.

Also, according to the legislation, national schools operate in places of compact residence of national minorities. In general, the marginalization of the small Russian population in Armenia is a long-standing problem. In Armenia, which has turned into a mono-ethnic state, neither the previous authorities nor the current authorities have done anything to eliminate this situation, which has become even more unbearable. For example, if according to the 1989 census statistics, Russians amounted to 51,000 people in Armenia, then in 2022 this figure dropped to 6000-7000 Russians.<sup>4</sup> This indicates that there has been a systemic ousting and expelling of other nationalities from Armenia over the past 30 years.

The only state Russian school operates in the village of Fioletovo, where the Molokan community has historically lived. But due to the state not providing sufficient funds to re-equip and repair the school, it is funded by the Russian embassy and Russian companies in Armenia. So, in 2019, with the support of the Russian close joint stock company South Caucasus Railway, the territory of the school was fenced, classrooms were repaired, textbooks were replenished, and new desks and equipment were purchased.<sup>5</sup>

This national policy has led to a situation in which the Russian-speaking population has practically left the country. At one time, opponents of Russian education argued that an Armenian brought up on Armenian literature and an Armenian brought up on reading Pushkin are different Armenians, and the country needs, of course, the first ones. A special language inspectorate even made sure that children from Armenian families were not accepted into Russian classes.<sup>6</sup> Any attempts to soften the law met with the resistance from Armenian

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4 "Demography", *The Government of the Republic of Armenia*, accessed September 10, 2022, <https://www.gov.am/ru/demographics/>

5 М. Мкртчян, «Копыркин в школе села Фиолетово: Молокане играют связующую роль между народами России и Армении», *ArmInfo*, September 2, 2019, [https://arminfo.info/full\\_news.php?id=44833&lang=2](https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=44833&lang=2)

6 Е. Yefimova, "Русский язык в Закавказье: быть или не быть?", *Ritm Eurasia*, March 3, 2016, <https://www.ritimeurasia.org/news—2016-03-03—russkij-jazyk-v-zakavkaze-byt-ili-ne-byt-22204>

society, especially the intelligentsia, who considered the increase in the status of the Russian language as an attack on the independence of Armenia.

Although Russian is taught as a foreign language, since the 2000s, the number of hours for teaching it has been reduced. It should be noted that there are also Russian classes in public schools in Armenia. If on average, up to 6 Armenian classes are formed in schools, then among them one Russian class is given. But not every family in Armenia has the right to send a child to these classes. To do this, the family must have Russian citizenship or be a representative of national minorities. Citizens of Armenia who have previously received education in Russia or in other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries are also eligible for education. This situation violates the rights of the Russian-speaking population of the country and leads to the curtailment of their freedom. In addition, there is a shortage of teaching aids and textbooks in all subjects in Russian classes in state schools. Many of them are sponsored by Russian centers or by various foundations operating in Armenia.

A similar situation is observed in higher educational institutions of the country. In recent years, there has been a trend of teaching in English in the universities of Armenia. Pedagogical universities have ceased to conduct training in Russian. And this, in turn, leads to a shortage of subject teachers for Russian classes in schools. All academic and university research excludes the Russian language. Doctoral studies provide for the writing of dissertations only in Armenian.

The first major discussion around the Russian language in Armenia took place in 2010, when, at the initiative of the government, amendments and additions were made to the laws titled “On Language” and “On General Education”. It also provided for the possibility of opening 11 foreign-language schools in Armenia: 2 private and 9 schools on the basis of intergovernmental agreements (all of them will be required to teach Armenian subjects in Armenian).<sup>7</sup> Although it was argued that these amendments were designed to create opportunities for Russian-speaking schools to operate, the Dilijan International School (UWC Dilijan College) was eventually opened, where education is conducted not in Russian, but in English.

In 2015, a branch of Moscow State University was opened in Yerevan, where education is conducted in Russian and diplomas are accordingly issued by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. The training program is fully consistent with the methodology of the Russian university program. Despite the great interest of applicants for admission to this

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7 A. Xalatyán, “Русский язык в Армении”, *Press-Unity.com*, April 5, 2018, <http://press-unity.com/analitika-stati/10616.html>



university, there are a number of requirements,<sup>8</sup> among which at the first stage is the mandatory passing of a written exam in the Russian language. Due to certain restrictions on the conduct of the Russian language in schools, many applicants are faced with the problem of entering university.

In general, in the field of education in Armenia today, the Russian language is studied as a foreign language, but there is a severe restriction of language rights in place according to the law adopted in 1993 that deprives citizens of the opportunity to receive education in Russian. This remains despite the discontent of the population. This is not only an indicator of the violation of human rights, but also contradicts the declared “democratic values” of the Armenian state. It also reveals that the rationale behind limiting access to Russian-language education is not based on practical considerations, but on an ideology that views Russian as a threat to modern Armenia’s state interests.

## **2. The influence of the political factor on the spread of the Russian language**

In Armenia, which is a mono-ethnic country where 98% of the population is Armenian, teaching Russian may not seem so important. But given the fact that Russia is the “guarantor” of Armenia’s security and the fact that Russian companies are highly active in Armenia and occupy leading positions in many areas of the economy, it becomes necessary to know the Russian language for citizens to enter the workforce. In addition, a part of Armenian citizens today is directly connected with Russia - someone works there, someone has relatives who they often visit, etc.

On the other hand, the Russian language plays a significant role for Armenia not only in maintaining cultural ties, but is also an important factor contributing to the integration processes in the post-Soviet space. It is known that in January 2015, Armenia joined the Eurasian Economic Union, one of the goals of which is the spread of the Russian language in the participating countries. But even this factor did not play a special role in promoting the teaching of the Russian language.

So, in November 2016, the Permanent Representative of Russia to UNESCO, Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Eleonora Mitrofanova stated that the Russian language should receive legal status in the constitutions of the countries of the former USSR. She also noted that, at present, Russian is defined in the CIS space at best by the term “language of interethnic communication”, which does not have a clear

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8 “Branch of MSU named M.N. Lomonosov”, *Eduscan.net*, accessed July 2, 2020, <https://eduscan.net/colleges/msuyerevan>

and understandable legal interpretation. This, in turn, creates a problem of accessibility for its study. In her opinion, “it is necessary to make special efforts to promote the Russian language abroad and raise the issue at a high level regarding giving the Russian language a legislative status in the countries of the former USSR”.<sup>9</sup>

Although Mitrofanova’s speech was not specifically addressed to Armenia, it caused a great resonance in the country. The media accused Russia of “imperialist” attempts to introduce Russian as the state language in Armenia. Anahit Bakhshyan, a member of the opposition Heritage Party, said this about Mitrofanova’s speech:

“Let Mitrofanova, and all the others who have a pro-Russian orientation, wrap their heads around the fact that the state language of Armenia cannot be any language other than Armenian ... this is an attempt to undermine foundations of our statehood and our sovereignty”.<sup>10</sup>

The Armenian authorities, represented by the Minister of Education and Science Levon Mkrtchyan, stated that the state language of the Republic of Armenia is Armenian, and the issue of the status of the Russian language is not being discussed. Vice Speaker of the National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia Eduard Sharmazanov stressed that the state language of Armenia is Armenian and there was no need to assign the status of a second state language to any language, be it Russian, Greek, or English.<sup>11</sup>

In July 2017, a stir in Armenia was caused by the statement of the Speaker of the Russian State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin, who proposed to consolidate the status of the Russian language as an official language in Armenia. He explained this proposal by the new law that came into force in Russia, which prohibits foreign drivers from working in Russia. In July 2017, Russia passed a law that allows drivers from Kyrgyzstan and Belarus to work with the license of their country, motivating the decision of granting state status to the Russian language in these countries.

At a meeting in the State Duma with Chairman of the National Assembly of Armenia Ara Babloyan, Volodin said:

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9 I. Mashkov, “Русский язык должен получить законодательный статус в странах бывшего СССР”, *The International Affairs*, November 17, 2016, <https://interaffairs.ru/news/show/16395>

10 N. Galechyan, “Оппозиционер требует жестко отреагировать на предложение придать особый статус русскому языку”, *Azatutyun*, November 19, 2016, <https://rus.azatutyun.am/a/28126979.html>

11 E. Sharmazanov, “Знание русского языка в Армении должно быть на высоком уровне, но он не будет вторым государственным языком”, *Lragir*, November 19, 2016, <https://www.lragir.am/ru/2016/11/19/52288>

“The decisions you are talking about, which we have adopted, apply to citizens of Kyrgyzstan and Belarus, since the citizens of these two countries studied the rules of the road in Russian. Knowledge of the Russian language also helps them in their work. Fix it as official, and then the norm of the law will automatically cover the Republic of Armenia”.<sup>12</sup>

Commenting on the statement of the Speaker of the State Duma of the Russian Federation Volodin, Sharmazanov noted<sup>13</sup> that the only official language in Armenia is Armenian and this is included in the constitutional norm.

In September 2017, Armenia’s Ministry developed a project on the concept of teaching the Russian language. It mainly dealt with improving the quality of teaching; revising curricula, replacing textbooks, retraining teachers, and so on. It was also planned to increase the number of schools and classes with in-depth study of the Russian language.<sup>14</sup> However, the concept caused discontent among the public. Some experts criticized the concept, which they considered was raising the status of the Russian language and argued there was no reason for this. But after the change of political power in April-May 2018, talk about the need to adopt the concept finally stopped. The current Nikol Pashinyan government is considering and strengthening measures on the status of the Armenian language.

In November 2018, Russian Ombudsman Tatyana Moskalkova announced<sup>15</sup> ongoing marginalization of the Russian language in several foreign countries, including Armenia, and emphasized that the ban on the study of the Russian language in some countries, including Armenia, created major problems and amounted to blatant violation of the rights of Russian-speaking people.

The former Minister of Education and Science of Russia, Olga Vasilyeva, while in Yerevan, at the end of the meeting with her Armenian counterpart Mkrtchyan, expressed her hope that Russia and Armenia would expand cooperation in the study of the Russian language. This statement itself

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12 “Спикер Госдумы России предложил Армении сделать русский язык официальным для признания водительских прав в РФ”, *NewsArmenia.am*, July 17, 2017, <https://newsarmenia.am/news/society/spiker-gosdumy-rossii-predlozhit-armenii-sdelat-russkiy-yazyk-ofitsialnym-dlya-priznaniya-voditelski/>

13 “В Армении не собираются закреплять официальный статус для русского языка”, *Eurasia Daily*, July 17, 2017, <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2017/07/17/v-armenii-ne-sobirayutsya-zakrepyat-oficialnyy-status-dlya-russkogo-yazyka>

14 G. Agbalyan, “Министерство образования Армении по поручению премьера разработало концепцию преподавания русского языка”, *Hetq.am*, September 13, 2017, <https://hetq.am/ru/article/81924>

15 “Москалькова заявила о нарушениях прав русскоязычного населения за рубежом”, *Izvestiya*, July 11, 2018, <https://iz.ru/809384/2018-11-07/moskalkova-zaiavila-o-narusheniakh-prav-ruskoiazycznego-naseleniia-za-rubezhom>

demonstrated the existence of a negative attitude towards the Russian language in Armenia and concerns about its future. However, despite the backdrop of growing pressure from Russia, Armenia has never expressed an unambiguous attitude to the ongoing issues related to the status of the Russian language in Armenia.

During his visit to Yerevan on June 8-9, 2022, the head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sergei Lavrov, stated<sup>16</sup> that Russia, taking into account the wishes of Armenian friends, is trying to increase the number of Russian schools in Armenia and to promote the improvement of the qualifications of Armenian-Russian teachers. This statement not only showed that fears and dissatisfaction with the level of development of the Russian language in Armenia still remain in force, but also demonstrated that the obstacles created by the Armenian authorities in this matter have not yet been removed. Undoubtedly, with a statement about the efforts to “increase the number of Russian schools in Armenia,” Lavrov once again expressed the protest of the Russian authorities to official Yerevan.

### 3. Russian language in audiovisual media in Armenia

The presence of Russian television and radio broadcasts on national frequencies also plays an important role in the spread of the Russian language. In 2000, the Armenian government adopted the law titled “On Television and Radio”, which allowed public television and radio companies to provide airtime for broadcasting special programs and broadcasts in the languages of Armenia’s national minorities. But at the same time, there was a strict restriction indicating that the duration of such programs should not exceed one hour a week on television, and one hour a day on radio.<sup>17</sup> Despite this, private channels were allowed to broadcast feature films or cartoons in Russian. However, Armenia is the only CIS state where news is not broadcast in Russian.

But Russian TV channels - “Perviy”, “RTR Planeta”, and “Culture”, as well as the interstate TV channel of the CIS countries “Mir” - until recently were included in the free public TV package. That is, having an ordinary television antenna on the roof, the inhabitants of Armenia still had the opportunity to receive these channels in the public broadcast.

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16 N. Qriqoryan, “Количество русских школ в Армении будет увеличиваться”, *Aravot*, June 9, 2022, <https://www.aravot.ru.am/2022/06/09/385893/>

17 “The law of the Republic of Armenia on television and radio broadcasting, 2000”, *National Assembly of the Republic of Armenia*, accessed April 15, 2021, <http://www.parliament.am/legislation.php?sel=show&ID=1464&lang=eng>

On June 18, 2020, the National Assembly of Armenia adopted a package of bills titled “On Audiovisual Media” and amendments to the law titled “On Licensing”, which provided for the replacement of the law titled “On Television and Radio”. These changes determine the status of the distributors of audiovisual media services, audiovisual information, regulate the procedure for licensing, permissions and notifications, the basis of rights and obligations, as well as relationships that arise in the course of such activities. This bill was soon adopted by the National Assembly on July 16, 2020, and signed by the President on August 5, after which it entered into force.<sup>18</sup>

The main difference between this law and the previous one is that it mainly provides for the strengthening of the state language and the transition to the Armenian language, regardless of the form of ownership of the TV channels. From now on, according to the new law, all programs in other languages will have to be dubbed into Armenian or broadcast with subtitles.

In fact, the main goal of the new law is the marginalization of the Russian language, which is in line with the policy of the new government in Armenia. Back in June 2018, the Minister of Education and Science Arayik Harutyunyan took the initiative to establish large fines against the organizers of various events, including scientific symposiums, if they do not provide full simultaneous translation into Armenian.<sup>19</sup>

It is known that Russian TV channels broadcast in Armenia have a fairly wide audience. But given the new legislative requirements, they have become available only in cable television, which not every citizen of Armenia can afford.

One of the drafters of the document, Vahagn Tevosyan, a deputy from the ruling My Step bloc, said that if a special agreement was not signed between Russia and Armenia before January 1, 2021, the broadcasting of Russian TV channels would become impossible in the future. Tevosyan explained;

“If by January 1, on the basis of any intergovernmental agreement, some foreign TV channel is in the public multiplex, then it will operate for seven years. If no agreement on this topic is concluded before January 1, then there will be no foreign TV channel in the public multiplex.”<sup>20</sup>

18 “Президент Армении подписал закон об аудиовизуальных медиа, который заменит закон о СМИ”, *Arka News Agency*, May 8, 2020, [http://arka.am/ru/news/society/prezident\\_armenii\\_podpisal\\_zakon\\_ob\\_audiovizualnykh\\_media\\_kotoryy\\_zamenit\\_zakon\\_o\\_smi/](http://arka.am/ru/news/society/prezident_armenii_podpisal_zakon_ob_audiovizualnykh_media_kotoryy_zamenit_zakon_o_smi/)

19 “Министр образования Армении пригрозил штрафами за нарушение закона о языке”, *Sputnik*, June 10, 2018, <https://m.ru.armeniasputnik.am/society/20180610/12573760/ministr-obrazovaniya-gotovit-shtrafy-za-narushenie-zakona-o-yazyke.html>

20 А. Халатян, “Армения ограничивает себе доступ к российскому телевидению”, *Kommersant*, May 8, 2020, <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/4443065>

Even at the first reading of the law, the Russian side declared its readiness for appropriate cooperation with the Armenian partners. This was repeatedly stated by the diplomatic mission of Russia. However, the signing of the aforementioned agreement seems not entirely realistic, since the preparation and signing of an interstate agreement in such a short time was literally impossible.

It is worth noting that in January 2020, when the bill was just announced, it caused bewilderment of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then the Russian embassy reacted to the statement by the Chairman of the National Commission on Television and Radio, Tigran Hakobyan, that the presence of foreign TV channels in Armenian airwaves “poses a threat to the national security of Armenia”, and the Russian ambassador allegedly agreed with this approach. However, later Hakobyan stated that his words were conveyed incorrectly, because he spoke not about national, but about “information” and “language security”. Additionally, Hakobyan did not mention Russian TV channels at all this time.

Concurrently, the Russian Embassy in Armenia expressed its opinion on the new law. The embassy stated;

“This issue is an internal affair of Armenia as a sovereign state. At the same time, the new law will directly affect the fate of broadcasting in the Republic of Russian TV channels. Of course, we are closely following the process of its consideration.”

The embassy also expressed the hope that the above considerations would complement the overall picture of the ongoing discussions, especially since the new law would definitely have a significant impact on information policy, which is a significant part of the overall complex of relations between two countries and peoples.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the adoption of this law is a continuation of the policy of weakening the influence of the Russian language in Armenia, which began from the day Armenia gained independence. It is known that the Russian language is not just a foreign language for the population of Armenia. The Russian side declared its readiness to resolve this issue, taking into account the special ties between the two countries. But so far the Armenian side has not taken any measures in this regard.

The new law, which makes a special provision for “language security”, aims for the complete marginalization of the Russian language, since few people

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21 “Посольство РФ в Армении отреагировало на новый закон об аудиовизуальных медиа”, *Arka News Agency*, June 26, 2020, [https://arka.am/ru/news/society/posolstvo\\_rf\\_v\\_armenii\\_otreagirovalo\\_na\\_novyy\\_zakon\\_ob\\_audiovizu\\_allykh\\_media/](https://arka.am/ru/news/society/posolstvo_rf_v_armenii_otreagirovalo_na_novyy_zakon_ob_audiovizu_allykh_media/)

are interested in other foreign TV channels in Armenia. Supporters of the bill believe that Russian channels voice opinions that do not coincide with Armenia's information policy on a number of issues, and, accordingly, they cause public harm.

The new law was met with criticism both in the public and in the media. Thus, the head of the Yerevan Press Club, Boris Navasardyan, noted that the adopted law will not restrict freedom of speech, but it retains the state's monopoly on terrestrial broadcasting, and this hinders the development of the media;

“The state has long monopolized broadcasting. And if, say, in the old days, in the days of analogue broadcasting, this was, to some extent, justified, because purely technological possibilities were limited, then after the transition to digital broadcasting, maintaining the same approach simply means staying in the past. And this hinders the development of the television industry”.

The head of the press club also said that the authorities took the wrong approach, considering such a sharp cessation of the broadcasting of Russian channels in the law. According to him, the authorities could take advantage of violations of the law. For example, he cited that TV channels must follow the law on elections and the electoral code, which stipulates for a day of silence on the eve of voting, but foreign TV channels did not adhere to this requirement. This could be a sufficient basis for sanctions and, ultimately, the cancellation of a license.<sup>22</sup>

Concerning this debate on the fate of foreign TV channels, the Director of the Caucasus Institute in Armenia, political scientist Alexander Iskandaryan, noted that Russian TV channels are not very popular and disputed their anti-Russian nature;

“According to the data that I had at hand two or three years ago, these channels were watched by less than 6% of the population. Perhaps there are some elements of ill-conceivedness in the law, but I don't think that it has an anti-Russian component.”<sup>23</sup>

In general, the norms of the new law on audiovisual media do not take into account the interests of numerous citizens of Armenia who constitute the permanent audience of Russian channels. After all, Armenia, which is a mono-ethnic country, has never been threatened with anything dangerous by the broadcasting of Russian TV channels. As such, the new law was apparently

22 T. Petrosyan, “Армянские аналитики исключили антироссийскую подоплеку нового закона о медиа”, *Kavkaz-Uzel.eu*, July 8, 2020, <https://www.kavkaz-uzel.eu/articles/352792/>

23 Petrosyan, “Армянские аналитики исключили антироссийскую подоплеку нового закона о медиа”.

formulated mainly around political goals. Indeed, the new Armenian government has openly expressed its anti-Russian position. In recent months, open anti-Russian statements in the pro-government media and social networks have also been noticeable, which causes concern in Russian circles. And it seems that the anti-Russian campaign is not limited to the adoption of the law on audiovisual media and will continue to follow in other forms.

### Conclusion

Russian is a widely spoken language among the majority of the Armenian population. Given the fact that today many citizens of Armenia, in conditions of unemployment in the country, as well as for higher education, go to Russia, there is a tendency among the public to learn the Russian language. In addition, there is a certain segment of the population who during the Soviet period received education in Russian, and who wish to send their children to schools where instruction is conducted in Russian.

Despite all these facts, in Armenia, where especially the current Nikol Pashinyan government is constantly talking about “democratic values”, the citizens are being deprived of the freedom of speech and choice. In truth, this process began from the day of Armenia’s independence after the collapse of the USSR. The political elites of Armenia perceive Russian as the language of an exceptionally small ethnic minority. The propagation of the Russian language and culture in Armenia has thus never received interest, and furthermore, the reactions shown against Russian language and culture can be seen as a manifestation of racial and ethnic discrimination.

Most importantly, this has amounted to a blatant violation of the requirements of the allied strategy between Armenia and Russia; Armenia, having allowed itself to virtually turn into an outpost of Russia, nevertheless pursues only its own interests in bilateral relations, enjoys the favor of the official Moscow at every step, but when it comes to some actions on its part, it uses various excuses under the pretext of protecting national interests. The Armenian authorities thus avoid taking concrete steps regarding the Russian language in accordance with the interests of their alliance with Russia.

The Armenian society and the leadership of the country are not interested in strengthening the state policy towards the Russian language or improving the quality of teaching and expanding the scope of its use. In 2021, remnants of the separatist Armenian regime in Karabakh declared Russian as an official language along with Armenian. At that time, this step seemed a logical consequence of the processes taking place in Armenia, which suffered a heavy defeat in the 2020 Karabakh War (the 44-day War). The desperate government



of Pashinyan tried to cover up the consequences of a terrible defeat in the war with such flattery to the official Moscow.

Despite the flattery, pursuing a policy of marginalization of the Russian language is part of the political course of the Pashinyan government. The weakening of the influence of the Russian language leads to a gradual loss of Russia's influence in Armenia, which is line with the Pashinyan government's Russia-sceptic stance. As such, the measures taken by the Armenian government for these purposes will most certainly continue.

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## BOOK REVIEW / KİTAP İNCELEMESİ

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F. Jale Gül ÇORUK\*

### ADAM AND EVE IN THE ARMENIAN TRADITION, FIFTH THROUGH SEVENTEENTH CENTURIES

(*ERMENİ GELENEĞİNDE ÂDEM İLE HAVVA,  
BEŞİNCİ YÜZYILDAN ON YEDİNCİ YÜZYILA*)

**Book Title:** Adam and Eve in The Armenian Tradition, Fifth Through Seventeenth Centuries

**Author:** Michael E. Stone

**Published:** Atlanta, Society of Biblical Literature, 2013

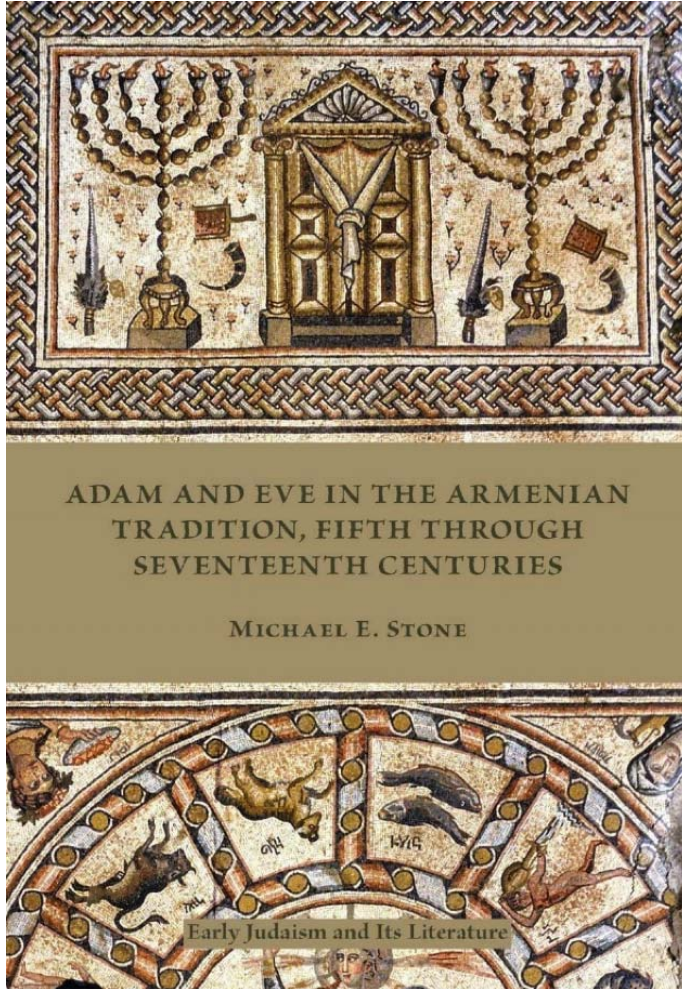
**ISBN:** 978-1-58983-898-7

**Language:** English

**Number of Pages:** 741

**M**ichael E. Stone, the author of this book, is a Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion and Armenian Studies at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. During his academic career, Stone pursued his studies under two categories: Jewish Studies and Armenian Studies. Most of his works thus focus on the intersection points of these

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two categories. Throughout his career, Stone also served as a visiting scholar at numerous universities, foremost being Yale University, University of Virginia, and University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Being a member of various editorial and scientific boards, Stone has been awarded around 10 awards in recognition of his academic works. To this date, he has been either the sole or joint author of more than 50 books. Some of his most recognized works are as follows: *The Manuscript Library of the Armenian Patriarchate in Jerusalem*, *Medieval Armenian Culture*, *The Armenians in Jerusalem and the Holy Land* and *Early Judaism: Texts and Documents on Faith and Piety*.

Stone's book titled *Adam and Eve in The Armenian Tradition, Fifth Through Seventeenth Centuries* that was published in 2013, which is the focus of this book review, contains two parts besides the Preface and Introduction.

Indicating that he had also carried out studies on Adam in the previous years, Stone explains in the Introduction that he decided to prepare this book to utilize texts on theological issues to reveal aspects of the historical trajectory of Armenian culture:

“The apocryphal literature attests to just one of the ways in which the Adam and Eve stories were rewritten within and influenced Armenian culture. To complete the picture, I decided not to look only at Adam apocrypha, of which there is an abundance in Armenian, but also at how the stories of Genesis 1–3 were reflected in Armenian literature. I was not interested in purely theological issues, nor in the simple use of such typology as the Old and New Adam in itself, although on occasion the typological passages bear narrative elements within them. This undertaking had two main goals. First, to see how the Armenians handled the biblical narrative and to try to isolate and specific retellings or interpretations that reflected particular theological or, indeed, historical circumstances. The other was to try to find out when the Armenian apocryphal Adam literature started to be reflected in dated authors and thus to get some idea of the dating of the Armenian Adam literature, which cannot have originated much before its attestation in the known authors. The present book is the outcome of this project.” (p. xix)

Stone also indicates in the Introduction that the basis for the publication this book was the project titled “Adam and Eve in Armenian Tradition” that was funded by the *Israel Research Foundation*.

The first part of the book titled “The Adam and Eve Traditions in Armenian” contains the following five sub-parts that chronologically present the period from the 5th to the end of the 17th centuries:

1. Adam and Eve Traditions in Fifth-Century Armenian Literature
2. Adam and Eve Traditions in Sixth- to Eleventh-Century Armenian Literature
3. Adam and Eve Traditions in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Armenian Literature
4. Adam and Eve Traditions in Fourteenth- and Fifteenth-Century Armenian Literature
5. Adam and Eve Traditions in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Armenian Literature



These sub-parts are all themselves divided into the following headings:

0. General Considerations
  1. The Creation
  2. The Garden of Eden
  3. Satan
  4. Sin and its Results
  5. The Burial of Adam and Other Traditions

The views expressed under these headings are analyzed and discussed based on the texts contained in the second part of the book. Additionally, there is an appendix at the end of the first part titled “Satan and the Serpent” that has been formulated around a single subject; “the variety of language and metaphor used [by the Armenians] to describe the relationship between Satan and the serpent” associated with the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden (p. 186). That relationship, according to Armenian imagination, takes on fascinating forms such as when the serpent is perceived as a “pack animal/vehicle” ridden by Satan or when the serpent is considered to be Satan’s arms and legs (p. 182).

The second part of the book titled “Texts and Translations” is dedicated to the relevant texts and their translations. A chronological order is followed here as well and texts belonging to each century are presented under separate headings. These texts are given in both Armenian and English. Stone indicates that most of the translations were done by him, while already existing translations were used for some of the works. Also, small biographical notes are present at the end of the book for each author whose texts were utilized by the author.

Stone’s book does not contain a conclusion part. This makes the structure of the book as interesting as its content. Indeed, Stone offers the following comment concerning his chosen method of narration;

“The reader may justly remark that each of the topical chapter sections throughout this book could be treated in the same diachronic way. I have chosen just one theme as a probe, to indicate how future research might develop, based on such corpora of texts as that presented here, and on a preceding synchronic analysis, which itself indicates connections between the development of specific directions of thought in the discrete segments of time.” (p. 177)

It would not be appropriate to expect chronological conclusions concerning Adam and Eve stories, since Stone only provides a narration when there is data to be processed for a specific sub-heading, and if there is no such data, he leaves that sub-heading empty and moves on to other sub-headings. Instead of making general conclusions in summation of all the centuries he has analyzed, Stone makes it apparent through his narration style that he wants the readers to make such conclusions. In short, the reader is forced to jump between sections and repeatedly visit texts from the same century rather than carrying out a systematic reading.

Stone provides a valuable source for those interested in Armenian studies through his accurate analyses and his comprehensive account of the Adam and Eve stories in Armenian tradition. The fact that short biographical information is provided for 130 Armenian authors, many of whom might have been forgotten in the passage of time, gives importance to the book for scholars of this subject. Finally, another important aspect of the book is that it makes the texts of Armenian authors accessible to people who do not know Armenian through the included translations.



## BOOK REVIEW / KİTAP İNCELEMESİ

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İlknur DİŞLİOĐLU\*

### A LETTER FROM JAPAN - STRATEGICALLY MUM: THE SILENCE OF ARMENIANS\*\*

(JAPONYA'DAN BİR MEKTUP -  
STRATEJİK SUSKUNLUK: ERMENİLERİN SESSİZLİĐİ)

**Book Title:** A Letter from Japan - Strategically Mum: The Silence of Armenians

**Author:** Iver Torikian

**Published:** Ankara, Terazi Yayıncılık, 2021

**Language:** English and Turkish

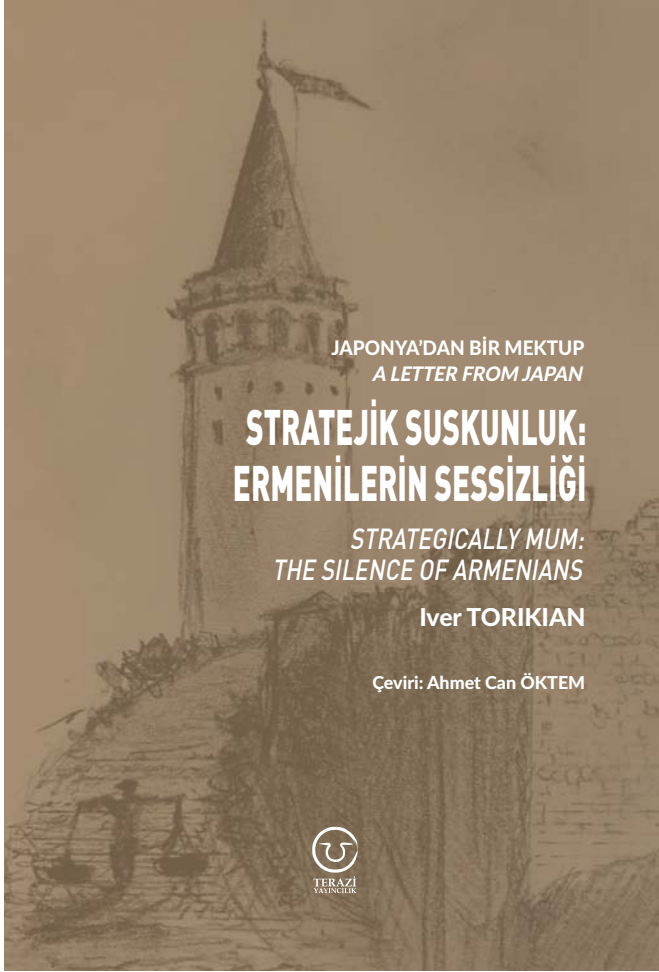
**ISBN:** 987-605-69199-8-5

**Number of Pages:** 86

“We, Armenians repaid Turkey by invading Turkey in 1919 with the assistance of the French army, committing many atrocities. It seems that the town of Oltu was particularly badly pillaged. As all Turkish historians know, it was these attacks — not any sort of

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‘procrastination’ by European governments — that compelled Atatürk’s nationalist army to attack Armenia. But most Westerners, particularly Americans, are most apt to accept the tales of Balakian and other Armenians than to dig out the truth. This is unfortunate, and unfair to the people of Turkey.” (p. 65)

The book under review here was prepared by combining letters written by Iver Torikian, a member of the Armenian diaspora who has lived and worked in Japan as an English teacher for many years. Torikian was born in the United States to a father of Armenian descent who was born in Turkey and a mother of German descent.

As mentioned in the preface of the book, Torikian sent the abovementioned letters to the *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)* in 2021 to express his frustration at the falsehoods that Armenian scholars and regular Armenian people believe to be true about Armenia-Turkey relations, and to encourage a factual approach to history. As Torikian puts it, many of the works by Armenian authors mentioned in his book were written by hiding some important facts. Thus, in terms of controversial subjects, the biggest difference of this work from the works of many other authors in the Diaspora is that Torikian seeks to examine and interpret events in history from both sides.

Although the letters written by Torikian are in essay format; they include his personal experiences and comments on the works by various Armenian authors. There are five letters in this regard. In the first letter, Torikian recounts his various memories concerning encounters with the members of his Armenian community and analyzes the general condition of Armenian society. In the next four letters, he examines various Armenian authors and their works. From Torikian's narrative, it can be inferred that he is trying to highlight the fact that the Armenian people are being unfair towards Turkey. Torikian obviously acknowledges the suffering of his own people during the First World War, but states that not only the Armenians but also the Turkish people went through much suffering during the same period. While examining Armenian authors in the following parts, it can be observed that Torikian has dealt with this subject extensively.

As previously mentioned, in the first part of the book, Torikian gives brief information about his life, shares his memories, and makes some inferences and comments about the Armenian community. In this part, he covers the unfair comments made by his family members and some of his Armenian neighbors about Turkey and the Turks. For example, when he was spending time with his cousin living in Canada, he witnessed him making comments such as; "Jews are the small rat. Turks are the big rat" (p. 50). When we look at the later paragraphs of the part, he states that the enmity between Turkey and Armenia mostly harms the Turks, and he states that the hostile feelings of the Armenian people against Turkey has put the Turkish government in harm's way in the international arena. Torikian indicates that this is exactly what prompted him to write his letters.

Torikian dedicates the second part to the analysis of the works of various Armenian authors. He begins with Raffi Khatchadourian's *The New Yorker* article that he initially mentions in the first part and comments that the author is distorting the truth (the 19-page article by Khatchadourian mentions Armenian heroes living in the Ottoman Empire, completely ignores the plight of the Turks, and only talks about the plight of the Armenians). Concerning this article, Torikian states;

“It still amazes me that it appeared in such a prestigious magazine as *The New Yorker*. When such writing is all that Westerners are exposed to, the result is an enormous distortion of history.” (p. 54)

While talking about this article, Torikian reminds his readers that that Turks have suffered as much as the Armenians. Later in the part, Torikian talks about the book titled *There Was And There Was Not* written by Meline Toumani. In her book, Toumani quotes her own experiences on the dispute over the 1915 events, which Armenian diaspora constantly promotes as the “Armenian Genocide”. In the book, Torikian states that the controversy surrounding these events increased in magnitude and transferred to future generations by the Armenian diaspora, and that the new generation of Armenian children have been brainwashed with this information and instilled with hatred. As for Toumani, based on her experiences with the Turks, she reflected the Turks in a positive way despite all that hatred instilled in the younger generation of Armenians. Torikian regretfully informs that although Toumani wrote the truth, she was ostracized by the Armenian people and media, and her book and the ideas it defended were met with hostility. Torikian predicts that he will be met with the same kind of ostracization by other Armenians that Toumani met because of the ideas put forth in his book (p. 59).

In the third part, Torikian provides evidence for his argument that the Hunchaks and the Dashnaks are not as innocent as they are portrayed in the Armenian media. For this, he uses information contained in the book titled *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement* published by the University of California. When a general evaluation of this part is made, it is seen that Torikian highlights the fact that Armenian authors who accurately narrate the violent actions of various Armenian groups during the First World War are met with rejection from the Armenian diaspora, and the Diaspora prefers exaggerated accounts of that period. As an example, Torikian comments that;

“Unfortunately, the works of [Ronald Grigor] Suny and other more even-handed Armenians are not widely read or discussed by the general public. Their books get very little publicity. Instead, the most widely read books on Ottoman Armenians by Armenian writers are sensationalistic and misleading. Occasionally, they even contain blatant lies.” (p. 63)

At the end of the part, Torikian argues that most Armenian authors generally maintain their silence on the true nature of controversial subjects, and thus prefer to keep the truth a secret.

When we look at the fourth and fifth parts, we observe that Torikian delves into the history of Armenia and Turkey. We can interpret the reason why he

did such research was to acquire more in-depth knowledge about the events that took place between Armenia and Turkey in history before writing his letters. According to his own interpretation, Armenians pass on their grudges from one generation to the next, and for this reason they cannot have healthy views on history. Torikian also comments on Armenian authors in these two parts, as in was the case in the previous parts, and states that the Armenian people should let go of their grudges to make room for the improvement of Armenia-Turkey relations.

The above-mentioned letters written by Iver Torikian, which also form the parts of the book under review here, can be considered as constituting an “open letter” addressed to anyone -Armenian, Turk, or a third party- who is willing to listen. They are an enlightening collection of letters for readers who want to hear a different voice or get an insider’s view of what Armenian-Turkish relations have focused on for years.





## BOOK REVIEW / KİTAP İNCELEMESİ

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## ARMENIANS IN MARAŞ AND THE ZEYTUN REBELLIONS\*\*

(MARAŞ'TA ERMENİLER VE ZEYTUN İSYANLARI)

**Book Title:** Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyancıları

**Author:** Nejla Günay

**Published:** Kahramanmaraş, Kahramanmaraş Büyükşehir Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları, April 2021

**Language:** Turkish

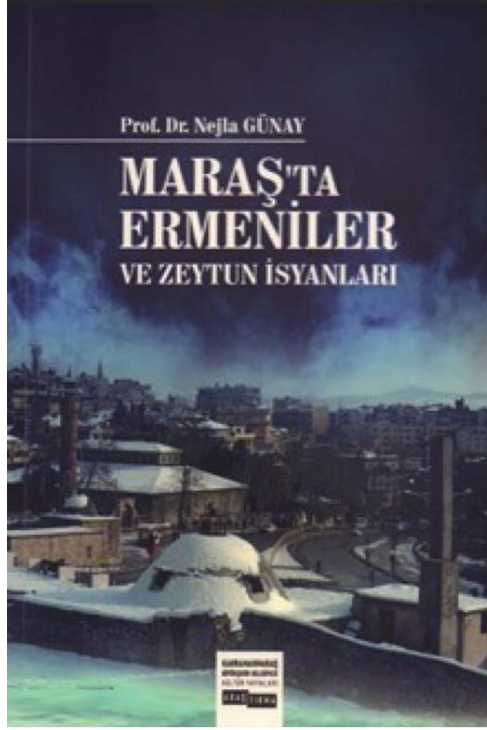
**ISBN:** 978-605-4996-91-9

**Number of Pages:** 364

One of the noteworthy places in Ottoman society where Armenians and Muslims lived together and were influenced by each other was Maraş (Marash). Maraş was one of the regions where the Catholic and Protestant missionaries had a strong influence, and these missionary activities resulted in the Armenians gaining their national consciousness. The Armenian rebellions that frequently occurred in the Zeytun (Zeitun)

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\*\* This is the English translation of a book review by Şevval Beste Gökçelik titled “Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyancılarına Dair” that was originally published in the 69th issue of the *Ermeni Araştırmaları* journal. Please see: Beste Ş. Gökçelik, “Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyancılarına Dair”, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 69 (2021): 219-223.



Township (*Kaza*) of Maraş were largely the product of the missionaries operating in Anatolia. In her book titled *Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyancıları* (*Armenians In Maraş and the Zeytun Rebellions*), Nejla Günay deals with the demographic, historical, cultural, political, and economic aspects of the Armenians living in Maraş, and the effects of the missionary activities on Armenians.

Completing her doctoral thesis with her study titled “Maraş Ermenileri” (“Armenians of Maraş”) in 2007, Günay published her thesis as a book in the same year with the title *Maraş'ta Ermeniler ve Zeytun İsyancıları* (*Armenians in Maraş and the Zeytun Rebellions*). The book was also awarded the best book award within the scope of the “Kahramanmaraş Kültürüne Hizmet Ödülleri” (“Awards for Service to the Kahramanmaraş Culture”) in 2012. Günay, who has contributed to the literature with her articles on Ottoman-Armenian, Ottoman-Russian, Ottoman-British relations throughout her academic career, continues to carry out research focusing on Ottoman social structure. Having earned the title of Professor in 2018, Günay continues to serve as a faculty member at the Division of History Education of the Department of Turkish and Social Sciences Education at the Gazi Faculty of Education of Gazi University.

Apart from the Introduction, the book consists of three chapters and draws a very detailed profile of Armenian-Turkish relations with materials obtained from both domestic and foreign sources. The Introduction mentions the geopolitical position of Maraş, its history, and the place occupied by the Armenians in the historical development of Maraş. The Introduction continues by narrating the historical developments concerning Armenian-Turkish relations starting from the 6th century when the Armenians were first settled in Maraş by the Byzantine Empire to Maraş's transition to Ottoman rule.

The first chapter of the book titled “Maraş'ta İdari Yapı, Sosyal ve Ekonomik Hayat” (“The Administrative Structure of Maraş and its Social and Economic Life”) carefully examines the demographic situation of Maraş; the religious, social, and cultural issues that dominated the region; the position of the Armenians in the social structure of Maraş; and the economic situation of the Armenians of Maraş.

A part of the Ottoman Empire's subjects were non-Muslims. They were granted the freedom of religion and conscience, and the right to open their own places of worship. As stated in the first chapter of the book, the Zeytun Township possessed the highest number of non-Muslims in the Maraş Sub-province (*Sancak*). It was this township where most of the Armenian rebellions occurred. Allowed to operate their own churches, schools, and foundations, the Armenians were ironically causing considerable damage to their own institutions because of these rebellions. For example, Armenian churches and schools in Zeytun were badly damaged during the 1896 rebellion, but they were repaired by the Ottoman authorities.

As clearly stated in the chapter, the position of non-Muslims in the Ottoman bureaucracy increased substantially after the proclamation of the 1856 Edict of Reform (*Islahat Fermani*). Muslims and Armenians were already intertwined in social life at that point. This chapter narrates the similarities of these two communities who were greatly affected by each other, the Armenians' role in the bureaucracy of the city, and their activities in agriculture and animal husbandry, industry, and trade.

The second chapter titled “Maraş'ta Türk ve Ermeni İlişkilerinin Bozulmasının Sebepleri” (“The Reasons for the Deterioration of Turkish-Armenian Relations in Maraş”) deals with the Eastern Question. The author indicates that the Eastern Question was raised because of the Great Powers' desire to further their interests against the Ottoman Empire, the seizure of the Empire's lands in Europe, and the expulsion of the Turks from Europe. In the continuation of the chapter, the author deals with the policies of the Great Powers against the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century and especially draws attention to the missionary activities of these states. The missionaries would settle in the

regions they wanted to exploit, and within the scope of missionary activities, would firstly introduce their culture with the aim of popularizing it and having it adopted. After the Edict of Reform was declared in 1856, Christian missionaries became more influential in the Ottoman territories. In this context, the chapter gives an account of the effects of the methods and activities of Catholic, Protestant, American, German, and English missionaries in Maraş on the Armenians.

These missionary activities resulted in the awakening of Armenian national consciousness. At the same time, these activities disseminated publications and hymns containing revolutionary ideas and installed in the Armenians a sense of hostility against the Turks. The Armenian rebellions and the reaction of the Ottoman Empire to these rebellions were also reflected in a distorted way to the world public opinion through the missionaries. The nationalist movement that gained momentum with the effect of these activities intensified with the emergence of the Serbian revolt in the Balkans. As mentioned in the book, after the independence developments in the Balkans, the Armenians became strongly attached to the belief that they could not gain their independence without resorting violent action. This thought, in turn, would be the catalyst for bloody rebellions.

The second chapter of the book also mentions the revolutionary committees established by the Armenians against the Ottoman Empire. The chapter narrates the formation of the Hunchak and Dashnak committees and many other associations, their aims, and the paths they followed. As the author indicates, these committees adopted terrorism as a method for their actions carried out in the name of Armenian nationalism. Their aims were similar; to establish an independent state, and while doing this, to get Europe's support by spreading the propaganda in the Western world that "Armenian massacres" were being committed in the Ottoman Empire.

The third chapter, titled "Maraş'ta Türk-Ermeni İlişkilerinin Bozulması ve Ermeni İsyanları" ("The Deterioration of Turkish-Armenian Relations and Armenian Rebellions in Maraş"), sheds light on the Armenian rebellions in Maraş that brought Turkish-Armenian relations to their breaking point. The chapter focuses on the Zeytun township of Maraş where a significant part of the Armenian events took place. As was done in the Introduction of the book, the chapter firstly mentions the geographical structure and administrative management of Zeytun and thus gives the reader a general perspective about the region.

Zeytun was a region where Armenians had rebelled only 20 years after they had first come under Ottoman rule. Therefore, from the very beginning, it was difficult for the Armenians of Zeytun to accept Ottoman dominion. In this

respect, as a tumultuous region, Zeytun offered the Armenians the opportunity to rebel more easily with the decrease in the number of soldiers in Maraş due to the 1768-1774 Ottoman-Russian War. Afterwards, the frequently rebelling Armenians became stronger with the establishment of the Hunchak and Dashnak committees, resulting in the rebellions gaining momentum. The author also mentions the various reforms made by the Ottoman government after these rebellions. In this context, the government conceded to bold demands such as the reduction of taxes, general amnesty, and the return of arms to the Zeytun Armenians.

The Ottomans, whose attention had shifted to different parts during the war with Russia in 1877-1878, were again confronted with rebellions in Zeytun. This chapter includes letters confirming that Britain played a major role in the rebellion of the Zeytun Armenians. While many people lost their lives in the rebellions that continued unabated, the distrust between the Armenian and Turkish sides reached its peak. While the chapter reflects the story of the confrontation of the two communities living in the same land for the sake of the interests of the Great Powers, it also highlights the rupture of the relations of these intertwined communities.

The events that Günay deals with are chronologically arranged in a way that constitutes the whole book. The author clearly presents to the reader the ups and downs in the Armenian-Turkish relations over the years. Mentioning the geographical, demographic, and historical structures of Maraş and Zeytun both in the initial and subsequent parts of the book clarifies the importance of these regions. The author examines the rebellions of the Armenians in Maraş in detail and uses various documents to support her frequently emphasized argument that the reaction of the Ottoman Empire to these rebellions was relayed to the Western media in a distorted manner by the missionaries. The book successfully explains the reasons for the rebellions that took place in the 19th century, by whom these rebellions were supported, the arming activities of the Armenians, and the aid they received in this process.

The book, which is enriched with both domestic and foreign sources, makes all its stories even more interesting for the reader with the included explanatory tables, visuals, letters, and maps. Nejla Günay, with her book titled *Armenians in Maraş and the Zeytun Rebellions*, presents the historical, social, cultural, and economic existence of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the rebellions they carried out by focusing on the Maraş region. Günay's book, with its captivating and succinct narrative, makes a great contribution to the literature and will serve as an excellent guide for researchers studying Armenian-Turkish relations.









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