

# INDIFFERENCE TO PROVOCATION

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**Editorial**, 3 November 2023

The Armenian St. Mary Church, the Armenian Community Centre, and the only Armenian high school in Toronto overlook the Victoria Park Ave. and the Consumers Road intersection in northeast Toronto. Across the road, on Victoria Park, is a parcel of land where a coffee shop and a mattress store have operated for a many years. The coffee shop is popular meeting place for Armenians, especially young men. Some stand outside, smoke and chat. The small park next to it is also a popular Armenian meeting place.

According to reliable reports, the mattress store will soon vacate and a Turkish restaurant will move to the site. The Turkish owner has paid top price to the landlord to eliminate competing businesses so as to make sure he establishes his Turkish restaurant across the most important Armenian hub of the city.

Of all the countless business sites in Toronto, the Turkish shish-kebab peddler has picked a neighborhood which is not Turkish and is packed by Armenians (residences and businesses).

Reflecting traditional Turkish provocation, there is no doubt the restaurant will have a blood-curdling name (Ataturk?), be emblazoned with the blood-soaked Turkish flags, perhaps photos of Ataturk, the three main genocidiars; Erdogan and Aliyev.

The acquisition of the particular site is no accident. Not too far from the Armenian hub (Shop At Don Mills plaza) a Turk pushed out an Iraqi Christian business by making a financial offer that the owner couldn't refuse. The opening of the Turkish restaurant is a provocation and aggression. It's an invitation to Armenians to dare retaliate. There's no doubt eventually there will be a clash between Armenians who patronize the coffee shop and the next-door restaurant's Turkish clients. It's also an invitation to a hot-headed Armenian young man to do damage to the invasive restaurant. And, of course, when that happens, the Turkish propaganda machine will be in full throttle, headed by the motor-mouth Turkish consul of Toronto who will be all over the media condemning Armenian racism, barbarity, and the importing of "foreign and ancient" quarrels to Canada.

The strange fact is that the Armenian Community Centre doesn't seem to have a plan to legally stop the provocation. The Centre has friends at the City Hall, the provincial and federal parliaments. The Centre's leaders can contact friendly politicians at various levels of government and explain to them the blatant Turkish provocation. They can explain that the Turk, who is probably not acting on his volition, is inviting Armenians to a fight which Armenians do not seek.

The various levels of the Canadian government spend untold millions to stamp out racism and to make sure the hundreds of ethnic groups which make up Toronto's population live in harmony. Children as young as four are taught at school about acceptance and tolerance. And yet this nameless restaurateur wants to parachute in the middle of the Armenian community and disturb the peace of the area. If this is not seeking a fight with the Armenian community of Toronto we don't

know what is. It's certainly not Turkish Delight that the no-name restaurateur will peddle across from the Armenian Centre, church, and school.

The indifference of the leaders of the Armenian Community Centre is not surprising. A few weeks ago, the Centre allowed the sabotage, by several young people, of a fundraiser for Artsakh refugees at the Armenian Community Centre. The demonstrators had hidden in the Centre along with their provocative posters. The young people eventually forced Armenia's ambassador to leave in disgust. The shameful event was telecast all over Baku TV stations. Is the Centre's indifference to the opening of the Turk restaurant a sign of sloth? Of incompetence? Of indifference?

## Comments



**Harry Mardirossian** – 2023-12-12 11:01:49

I remember in the early 80's the office tower at the corner of Consumer's Road and Vic Park housed three Armenian well to do developers. Looking from its seventh floor down, on the opposite side there were several semi-vacant properties, including the subject building. I suggested to my Armenian clients to buy them and develop. Municipally the subject property was within the boundaries of the City of Scarborough, while the "Armenian Hub" was on the opposite side in North York with a different set of politicians. They chose to invest elsewhere. Soon later, the coffee shops emerged. A prominent Armenian grocery business attempted to open a branch, but the new oriental owners developed it to their plans. Several opportunities rose but the "Hub" managers chose not to use it but loose it. All the rest is a result of shortsightedness and indifference, now the community must endure for decades to come.



**H** – 2023-11-06 13:57:04

Let's hope they are not armchair liberals only but serious and active readers and doers.



**Hayorti** – 2023-11-05 11:46:48

H, I hope the leaders of the community, not just the members of the Toronto Armenian Centre, read the editorial and stop the Turkish project.



**H** – 2023-11-04 22:57:44

A, you make perfect sense that it could be a cover for something other than what it is supposed to be. Monitoring with cameras, and reporting to the authorities will be useful. In the meantime, engaging Armenian or non-Armenian wealthy people to buy the store may put "them" on notice. Be proactive before "they" buy, one at a time.



**A** - 2023-11-04 07:27:26

This could be a Turkish police station. Did you think of this? Chinese police stations are everywhere in Canada and somehow a criminal dictator like Erdogan wouldn't have any when it is known he has established mosques in Europe and armies of grey wolves ready to act on his order. The location says everything. It doesn't need to sell anything . We see restaurants with no customers or Turkish residents operating in Armenian neighbourhoods too. Place cameras, monitor and report it as a police station to the RCMP.



**H** - 2023-11-03 23:08:36

Mesrob, Thank you for bringing sense to a senseless comment. Your response is well placed. With all the Genocides and deportations by the turkic tribes, his comment required a response like yours.



**Vrej M** - 2023-11-03 23:08:32

If you have a complaint to make about turks, why not also make contact with the Greek and Assyrian communities? Why do Armenians always decide to go at 2 powerful countries alone?



**H** - 2023-11-03 18:48:14

Not knowing what has transpired so far, we need to accept the fact that Armenians seem to be reactive rather than proactive. Are there wealthy Armenians who would buy the provocative purchase?! Correctly stated, the Armenian masses do not discriminate. They will buy from the devil to gobble. Do something provocative back. Buying the store to stop the turkish trend of buying the next and the next in the middle of the Armenian community may be the only way. Nowadays the turkic tribes seem to think they are privileged to take over everything Armenian. Rather than complain about policies of the deranged, buy the store.



**Mesrob** - 2023-11-03 17:09:27

Alex, To answer you categorically: Pashinyan's relations with Turkey do not necessarily reflect the opinion of all Armenians, particularly Diaspora Armenians. Your suggestion that I should have joined the Oct. 15 troublemakers is vulgar presumption. Alex, That you don't see a problem in the establishment of a Turkish restaurant across from the heart of the Toronto Armenian community (church, school, centre) and in an Armenian neighborhood suggests you are not entitled to a reply. But I will try (for the last time). Toronto is the fourth-largest city in North America. It has a population of more than 4 million. It has countless business sites. And yet, the Turk picked to open his restaurant in the centre of the Armenian hub., in an area which doesn't have Turk or Azeri residents. I agree with the editorial that it is provocation and aggression. Of course, you are free to be naive. Your comment makes me suspect you will be at the door of the Turkish restaurant the day it opens. Happy Imam bayenduh to you.



**Alex** - 2023-11-03 12:34:54

I don't understand why it's an issue when someone wants to open a business in a free country. If we have organized government too we could have done the same, instead of criticizing. The Armenian government is acting and doing all it's policies favoring present Turkish government and here YOU want to block opening a Turkish restaurant! what a bizarre world we live in. Instead, if you are against pro Turkish policies you should also demonstrate against the present Armenian government, and you could have joined the clever youngsters at the community center. If they have informed about the stand I am sure a lot more people would have joined them.



**Tavit** - 2023-11-02 23:04:04

Buy no Turkish products ever!



**Hagop** – 2023-11-02 19:52:38

I think we shouldn't jump to conclusions. It was a regrettable incident what happened two weeks ago. What is more regrettable, using emotions rather than wisdom. The first incident could have been solved very amicable way. I have great respect to the ambassador and the youth have expressed that too. They also told her, it wasn't personal, but a message to the government that she represents, because the Pashinian government has banned several Armenians entry to Armenia. The Armenia fund has members from all organizations, the ARF member should have handled the incident. It's very simple, it's called delegation. The second item, yes, anyone has the right to open a shop wherever they want, whether Turkish or Israeli. The tragedy that I see is our hypocrisy. I can guarantee that most of the clients of that shop are going to be Armenians. We have been talking about boycotting Turkish products, yet almost all Armenian grocery shops carry Turkish products, whether in Toronto, or Fresno CA. Actually one particular shop that carries in Fresno is in ARF leadership. Regrettably, the 44 day war, the recent depopulation of Artsakh hasn't thought us anything. We continue attacking each other.



**Marie** – 2023-11-02 18:48:45

The only way to answer to make sure that business suffers by not having any sales. No sales no business, but the minute Armenians will go and buy food from there the provocation against Armenians will continue.