

FAMILY TO RECOVER 11 ACRES OF CONFISCATED LAND IN TURKEY

Posted on December 23, 2009 by Keghart

**the armenian
reporter**

Category: [Opinions](#)



 [The Armenian Reporter](#), 27 November 2009



Historical Summer residence of the German ambassador in the Ottoman Empire.
Located at the shore of the Bosphorus in Tarabya, Istanbul, Turkey. Christian Koehn.

Istanbul, Turkey - An Armenian family will recover 11 acres of land confiscated by the Turkish Treasury in 1949. The land, on the European shores of the Bosphorus, in the affluent Tarabya neighborhood of Istanbul, houses luxurious villas, historic places, nightclubs, and restaurants.

 [The Armenian Reporter](#), 27 November 2009



Historical Summer residence of the German ambassador in the Ottoman Empire.
Located at the shore of the Bosphorus in Tarabya, Istanbul, Turkey. Christian Koehn.

Istanbul, Turkey - An Armenian family will recover 11 acres of land confiscated by the Turkish Treasury in 1949. The land, on the European shores of the Bosphorus, in the affluent Tarabya neighborhood of Istanbul, houses luxurious villas, historic places, nightclubs, and restaurants.

According to Agos, 11 of the Agopyan family's 25 acres of land in the Kirecburnu and Tarabyan neighborhoods were transferred to the Treasury during cadastral surveys in 1949. The owner, Marten Agopyan filed a lawsuit. But before the issue was resolved, the ethnic cleansing of September 6-7, 1955, occurred and Mr. Agopyan and his family fled Istanbul to settle in the United Kingdom.

After Mr. Agopyan's death, his son Bedros Agopyan restarted the legal proceedings. A Turkish court in 2005 ruled in favor of the Agopyan family. In response, the Treasury filed a lawsuit for "annulment of title deed," which the court rejected in January 2008.

"After we won the lawsuit, the Treasury demanded retrial on the grounds that Agopyan's father made a speech in Bucharest to provoke people against the Ottomans before World War I," the Agopyan family attorney Cafer Gül told Agos. "Considering that Marten Agopyan never went to Bucharest and was a U.K citizen, the Sariyer Civil Court of First Instance rejected the request for retrial. Then, they applied to the Court of Appeals, but the decision of the Sariyer Civil Court of First Instance was sustained."

In the meantime, in June 2008, Bedros Agopyan died. His wife and daughters continued the lawsuit. What will happen to the land? "We've managed to take 8.5 acres so far, and there are 15.5 acres lost,"

Mr. Gul said. "There are lands registered in the name of municipalities and individuals. We are waiting for enactment of a new law regarding the return of minority properties or compensation for lost ones."

If such a law is not enacted, the family will resort to the European Court for Human Rights, Mr. Gül said. "We filed a lawsuit in Civil Court, but we could not recover the land. Thus we have come to the end of local legal channels, and we have to resort" to the European court.

Marten Agopyan, the son of an Armenian family from Kayseri, established a bank in Istanbul in the early 1900s. With the onset of World War I, he moved to Romania with his family, but returned after the establishment of the Turkish republic.

The vast majority of Armenians lost their lives and property in the Armenian Genocide of 1915-17. The Turkish state systematically prevented the return of survivors to their homes and then confiscated properties it deemed "abandoned." During World War II, the state imposed a punitive tax on wealth; arbitrary assessments were made on Armenians, Greeks, and Jews. Tens of thousands who were unable to pay were sent to labor camps and saw their property confiscated. Thus, the Agopyan family's case is not typical of the Armenian experience in Turkey.

