

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY CONSUL GENERAL REPLIES

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*The below is the reply to "[Same Old Tricks](#)" by Raffi Bedrosyan
(Keghart.com Feb. 25, 2015).--Editor*

Ali Riza Guney, Consul General, Toronto Consulate General of Republic of Turkey, 10 March 2015

Both "hate" and "vengeance" are unrivaled and untamed emotions that devastatingly blur and distort the reality, paralyze the analytical thinking process in a cause and effect sequence, debilitate the will of opting for a constructive problem-solving, create an extreme skepticism and close each and every door to a possible reconciliation. 

In case these self-destructively explosive feelings are irresponsibly transmitted to new generations, then not only today but tomorrow will be taken hostage and damaged in an irreversible manner.

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The article titled "Same Old Tricks" by Mr.Bedrosyan seems to be a case in point and needs a series of corrections based on the below-mentioned facts.

First:

It has to be clearly understood that Turkey and the Turks empathize with the Armenians and do not deny the tragedy they faced 100 years ago. There were injustices committed, killings of innocents occurred and immense suffering inflicted. This empathy emanates from our common conscience, regardless of the definition of that tragedy. As a clear manifestation of this humane approach, our President issued last year a message of condolences to the relatives of Armenian victims. Therefore, blaming the Turks with "denialism" is unfair, if not a pure mind game with words.

The historical fact which has been denied is that Turks were also killed and massacred before, during and after the First World War. Let alone the millions of losses in the Balkans, the Middle East and in Anatolia. Between 1914-1918, the Russian Army and Armenian rebels wiped out an estimated 518,000 ethnic Turks and other Muslims in eastern Anatolia and in the South Caucasus.

Neither Turks nor Armenians can claim a monopoly of suffering during that war era. No one's losses are less dear than that of other's.

Second:

The word "Genocide" is a legally defined crime with specific conditions of proof that can only be verified by a competent international court. There is no such court decision. Therefore, this word cannot be used to define those tragic events of 1915. Furthermore, parliaments cannot act on behalf of courts and politicians cannot pretend they are judges.

Despite Armenian claims to the contrary, there is no consensus either among academics on the "common body of knowledge", the term that rightfully and creatively was coined by Mr. Bedrosyan himself.

To reach that "common body of knowledge", Turkey's suggestion ten years ago to establish a "Joint Historical Commission" among academics of both countries and third parties is still on the table and indeed was part of the Protocols signed by Turkey and Armenia in Zurich in 2009, which was withdrawn by Armenian side a few weeks ago.

Third:

The year 2015 marks not only the centenary of 1915 but also a series of significant other historical events. The Battles of Çanakkale/Gallipoli during the First World War I epitomize the great sufferings and the great losses of all nations who fought against each other, and who now commemorate together in peace.

April 25, which marks the anniversary of the commencement of the land battles in Gallipoli, is observed as the "Anzac Day" in Turkey, Australia, New Zealand and several other Commonwealth States, including Canada.

With a view to harmonize with the Anzac Day, and to capitalize on the international presence in Turkey during that day, the day prior to the 25th of April has been established as the "International Day" for more than a decade, and commemorative ceremonies are being held on that very day.

Therefore, there is no need to attempt to create a confusion on this ordinary sequence of commemorative events.

Fourth:

The joint observation of this event in a peaceful and friendly atmosphere, by those who were once

enemies, is a matter of the level of maturity reached by nations that once fought against each other.

While inviting Armenia to this ceremony, we intended to provide an opportunity for Armenia to become a part of this humane effort.

We also expected that Armenia, by participating in this ceremony, could alongside Turkey, represent those Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives in Gallipoli while defending the homeland.

Armenia unfortunately once again failed to seize this opportunity and showed that it is far from sharing this open-minded approach.

Fifth:

The allegation that "the real perpetrators and conspirators of the murder of beloved Hrant Dink are still not arrested or tried" is another myth that has to be debunked. As a result of meticulous investigation which is being conducted and will proceed till whomever it reaches, the murderer was arrested immediately after the deplorable incident and there were additional arrests a short while ago.

We expect the same principled approach to be exhibited with regard to arresting the perpetrators and conspirators of the murder of Col. Atilla Altıkat, the Turkish military attache who was killed in Ottawa 33 years ago.

In addition to the above clarifications, I would like to share one more point:

We all regretfully witnessed the so-called peaceful protest of the Armenian youth at a conference planned to be delivered by two American professors a couple of weeks ago at the University of Toronto. The protest of the Armenian youth--turning their backs to the professors, as if they were at a soccer stadium, and then leaving the hall by disrupting the flow of the presentations-- are remarkable outbursts of the disheartening mood Armenian youth are being injected incessantly.

The issue of the 1915 events is not a taboo in Turkey. Books defending the Armenian view of events, televised debates and newspaper columns giving support to the "genocide" thesis, conferences presenting the Armenian version of history are not uncommon there. The centennial commemoration events organized by the Gomidas Institute to be held between 18-24 April 2015 in Turkey speaks for itself with regard to the exemplary free atmosphere on our side.

The same attitude is expected from Armenia and Armenians in the diaspora, by letting alternative narratives be voiced. It is nothing but surreal that not a single person claims the 1915 events as "not genocide" in Armenia and the Armenian diaspora.

Now it is time to answer the question of Mr. Bedrosyan with a similar question:

Are Armenians sure to proceed with this destructive mindset? Is this Armenians' final answer? We sincerely hope not.

