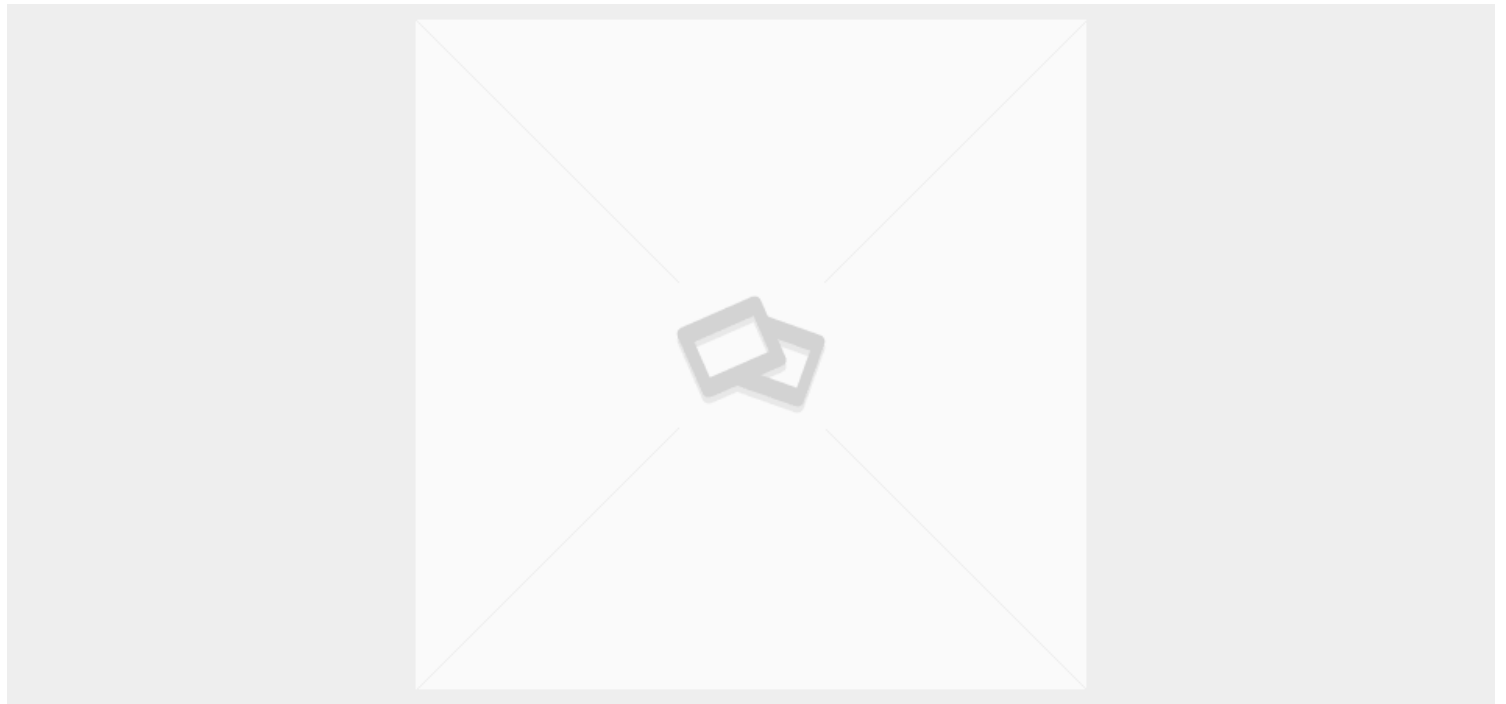
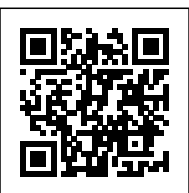


WAKE UP, ARMENIANS!

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Editorial, **Tesaket (Opinion)**, Yerevan, 28th of April, 2009

*The Institute for Democracy and Human Rights (IDHR) is an independent non-governmental not for profit organization based in Yerevan, Armenia, registered in August 1999 under the Association Law of the Republic of Armenia. IDHR's main goal is to contribute to the development of democratic Armenian statehood based on the principles of human rights, social justice and solidarity. The Following is the editorial that appeared in the most recent issue of IDHR's quarterly Journal **Tesaket (Opinion)**. It is brought to the attention of the public with the expectation that the message of the editorial will help overcome the phenomenon of demoralization presently observed both in Armenia and in the Diaspora.*

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WAKE UP, ARMENIANS!

**Wake up Armenia, wake up Artsakh, wake up Diaspora,
Wake up Armenian people, wherever you are, before it's too late
in order to be reborn, to begin living a full and dignified life,
in order to finally put an end to this vicious cycle,
which is imposed upon you and which is wrecking you permanently.**

During 18 years of independence, the Republic of Armenia has not witnessed the development of an Armenian State-Building Project based on human rights, social justice and democracy. Instead, from 1991 onward, all authorities of the Republic of Armenia have implemented neo-liberal, inhumane, exploitative and anti-national policies differing merely in name and style.

The continuous exploitation, oppression, inhumane treatment and undignified life conditions of the Armenian people over the past 18 years gave birth to a wave of uprisings in 2008. Ironically, due to the absence of a real alternative, these revolts were unfortunately led by the First President, himself the founder of the current regime and its state apparatus. The peak of these uprisings fell on March 1, 2008, which became a turning point after which Armenia continues to look like a weakened fortress that has neither a plan for its meaningful existence nor proper means of protection. In the mean time, the self-appointed "guardians" of fortress Armenia are scrambling to hand over the fortress keys to the enemy, in hopes of keeping their posts and their ill-gotten lands and the loot.

Lacking organization and a clear pan-national political state-building project for its existence and development, the population of Armenia and the Armenian people all-over are unable to formulate their aspirations or impose their will on the succeeding self-proclaimed rulers and authorities, and make them carry out their mission. Precisely these self-proclaimed rulers ignore the Armenian society and people, and have not earned the trust and legitimacy of their own people; instead, they remain accountable only to foreign powers such as the USA, Russia, the European Commission, and Turkey, because it is from these outside entities, and not from their own people, that they derive their powers and future safeguards.

In the absence of political and civic consciousness and will and its own political project of state-building, the political elites of Armenia have become tools in the hands of foreign forces and adopted destructive and colonialist policies that have consistently robbed our people, undermined our families and society, and reversed all positive achievements over the past 18 years; and the people of Armenia have failed to rise to the elites and demand accountability from them.

On the 22nd of April, 2009, the eve of the Armenian Genocide Memorial Day, the Republic of Armenia's authorities and Turkey signed an agreement. They hold in secrecy and do not dare to publicise the content of this agreement. The scant details offered indirect to the public are ambiguous and do not inspire confidence and trust to Armenian people. The Armenian authorities claim that this agreement is a major achievement for us; perhaps this is true for them personally, but certainly not for the Armenian people. In light of the lessons learned from the history of our nation and cognizant of the geopolitical plans of Turkey and other great powers for our region, it is not difficult to conclude that the hastily drawn and secretive "road map" will eventually lead to a repudiation of our territorial entitlements in Western Armenia and Artsakh (Nagorno Karabagh) and a retreat in the struggle to gain LEGAL recognition of the Armenian Genocide and just compensation for its survivors.

As a collective of free and conscious people, and as an independent Armenian civic actor (not a tool), IDHR deems Armenian-Turkish agreements as unacceptable if they require a mutual recognition of present day Armenian-Turkish territorial integrity, sanction Turkey's interference in the Artsakh settlement process (in view of Turkey's overtly hostile stand and actions towards Armenia), and subsequently cast doubts on long-established facts of the Armenian Genocide under the guise of "unbiased analysis by a committee of historians".

The present government has no mandate to compromise on these crucial issues and forego our inalienable rights. No matter how much stronger Turkey might be politically, economically or militarily, any compromise on these issues will deprive the two Armenian states of their fundamental rights to existence and development, and will weaken our political and moral hands in the region.

We demand a stop to the ongoing process of negotiations with Turkey, a cancellation of all agreements that are incompatible with the interests of the Armenian people and do not originate

from its collective will, and a reformulation of our own preconditions in accordance with the interests of our people and the Armenian statehood.

The just and fair achievements on the Artsakhian front, achievements won with the blood of our martyrs, are being questioned today. Negotiations with Turkey and recent international developments are also influencing the Armenian-Azerbaijani settlement process to our detriment. Statements are heard about "donating" to Azerbaijan the liberated territories (in their entirety or in part) and admitting international peacekeepers on the borderline, in return for the uncertain prospects of an eventual recognition- over a period of 10-15 years- of the independence of the Nagorno Karabagh Republic (NKR).

We maintain that NKR must be included immediately in the negotiation process, steps must be undertaken to recognize its independence, and we must be ready to defend the liberated territories and our just rights.

Unless it is fully supported by the people and mandated with the legitimacy to do so, no authority retains the right to sign with a foreign power, whether hostile or friendly, an agreement involving the fundamental rights and interests of our people. We must remember the lessons painfully learnt from our own history and understand the reason why, again and again throughout centuries, the Armenian nation has been subjected to numerous massacres culminating in a genocide, and how we have been deprived of and have lost the Armenian STATEHOOD, the sole guarantor of Armenian people's security and existence.

The authorities of the Republic of Armenia must always remember that their first and foremost obligation is to act in accordance with the interests of their own people and to be accountable to them. Alas, Armenian political elites have always given priority and been accountable to foreign countries, too often becoming their puppets and betraying fundamental national-state interests and principles.

It is necessary to understand, once and for all, that basic priorities for the Armenian people and statehood today are security, sustainable development and prosperity and justice, and not the issue of opening of the border with Turkey (which is closed by Turkey by the way). Defeatist policies related to Artsakh and the Armenian Cause will be fatal for the Armenian people, while the expedience of border opening with Turkey remains very disputable.

To solve our internal economic, social and political problems, our priorities should be the swift implementation of a fair redistribution of national wealth and introduction of a meaningful social justice through a governance system driven by legitimate Armenian authorities elected fairly and democratically. Up to now, the opposite policies have been adopted and implemented by Armenian authorities and elites.

In the current global situation, when the systemic cracks and crises are casting doubts on the effectiveness of the entire global system, when in-depth transformations are taking place in the

social, economic, political and civic ideological spheres, when attempts are undertaken to revise the old world order and create a new one at all levels, the Armenian people find themselves in the worst starting position.

Inside the country – in Armenia and Artsakh - dissidence and fragmentation dominate, the political elite is discredited, society is apathetic and alienated; outside Armenia, the Diaspora is confused and unable to undertake an effective role in building Armenian statehood.

Armenians continue to be characterised as old and passé nation, as opposed to an old and wise one. We are unable to register a RENAISSANCE and continue to pay the price for our elites' stupidity and short-sightedness. We tolerate this all-conivance and forego our just demands of our own free will, becoming a ball in others' game of football diplomacy. We adapt ourselves with connivance to the image of the miserable, the victim, the forever sufferer. We must become aware of all this and wake up from our somnolence so we can establish conditions for a dignified existence and development, so we can build a bright future for ourselves.

Therefore we, as a collective of free and conscious people, citizens and residents of Armenia, as an INDEPENDENT Armenian civic ACTOR, and having the full right for this, WE WARN:

Present and past authorities of the Republic of Armenia, You should immediately stop your feeble, slavish and defeatist policy and be accountable to your own people, for the sake of the Armenian people and statehood and in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. It is necessary to come out of the present miserable existence, undertake steps that derive from the interests and security of the Armenian Statehood and people, and to do so solely with the approval and authorisation of the people.

Though we are still small in numbers, we are highly conscious and proactive forces working among the Armenian people; we will stay loyal to every word of the Armenian Constitution and will, in the end, hold you accountable to your own people for your anti-national/state deeds. We must put an end to 18 years of catastrophic habits of insincerity and connivance.

We once again warn Armenian elites,

Serving the people is your true mission and work; your lives and your existence are meaningful only due to the people and, therefore, you have to fulfil their will.

Armenian people!

Your elites will never be accountable to you as long as you are indifferent, frightened and disorganised, and as long as you let crimes go without punishment, at the cost of your individual and national existence. Indeed, you face a threat to your very own existence. Nature has gifted all its creatures with minimal ability of self-defence. Regain this ability! This is required by the highest laws of nature, humanity and justice– the right to EXISTENCE and LIFE.

Let us remember and once again be aware that we have experienced our human as well as national victories and renaissances only at times when we have trusted our own power, have organised ourselves, and become keenly aware of our goals, of the seriousness of our situation, and finally stood up. Now we live one of those historic and fatal moments, when we have no right to keep silent, to exonerate ourselves from blame, to hide or to escape...

We call upon all healthy and reasonable Armenian individuals and forces!

It is the time to build the real pillars of our Independent statehood, to give meaning to our statehood and work out our own national-state political project, road map and time schedule, which shall be based on the principles of human rights, social justice and democracy. The mission of this project is to formulate and map the existence, welfare, and development of all Armenian citizens and people as a human unit and a full member of the human family, peacefully and safely, under the protectorate of its own, reborn statehood.

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