



Armenian National Committee of America – Western Region

July 11, 2023



Dear Senator [REDACTED]

I am writing to you on behalf of the Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region (ANCA-WR), the largest and most influential Armenian-American grassroots advocacy organization in the western United States. We are dedicated to advancing the civic, cultural, and political rights of Armenian-Americans and advocating for strengthening ties between the United States and Armenia.

It has come to our attention that the Consul General of Turkey in Los Angeles has disseminated a letter to elected officials highlighting the “positive developments in Turkish-Armenian relations,” referring to the recent invitation of Nikol Pashinyan, the Prime Minister of Armenia, to the inauguration ceremony of the Turkish President Erdogan. The Consul General then deceptively implies that the Armenian Diaspora is actively playing a role in spoiling the normalization of ties between Armenia and Turkey. It is a ludicrous assertion for the Consul General of Turkey in Los Angeles to imply that the mere invitation of Armenia’s top official to Turkey absolves the Turkish state of its past and present crimes against the Armenian nation. The true intentions of Turkey are further to enervate the Armenian nation vis-à-vis a shamolic normalization process and to silence the Armenian Diaspora.

The Armenian nation is enduring the most challenging period of its history following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the subsequent Liberation of Artsakh in the 90s. With the Turkish government's and military's full support, Azerbaijan launched a brutal invasion of Artsakh in late 2020, displacing hundreds of thousands of Armenians and causing thousands of deaths, including civilian non-combatants such as elderly and disabled persons. It was Turkey that provided Azerbaijan with devastating drone technology, advised its troops in Azerbaijan’s ground operations, and brokered the transport and payment of mercenaries from known terrorist organizations who fought alongside Azerbaijani troops.

The relationship between Turkey and Azerbaijan is guided by the principle of “One Nation, Two States” due to their cultural and historical connections. President Erdogan has minced no words in outlining his and Ilham Aliyev’s intentions for the Armenian people, on numerous occasions stating, “We will continue to fulfill this mission, which our grandfathers have carried out for centuries, in the Caucasus again.”. Such a statement from a despotic regional power with a consistent record of human rights abuses and campaigns of ethnic cleansing should raise serious concerns for all, as it has repeatedly proven that it will make good on its threats to erase an entire nation and its people from the map.

These so-called “positive developments” reflect a process that, at every stage, has imposed crippling one-sided concessions from Armenia under duress in the face of imminent genocide and subjugation. Turkey, to this day, still denies the Armenian Genocide and the multitudes of its crimes against the Armenians, and



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it continues to use its blunt power and regional influence to cause further harm to Armenia and the region. Instead, at such a crucial moment in efforts to normalize relations between Armenia and Turkey, the United States must apply the appropriate pressure on the aggressor—Turkey—to ensure that no contingencies or preconditions are imposed upon Armenia. On the international stage, the United States is faced with an important decision that will undoubtedly shape the destiny of the Armenian nation. If we fail to guide the normalization process appropriately, we reward Erdogan’s belligerence and invite violence and oppression upon a fledgling democracy.

Recent actions by Turkey further contradict the notion of “positive developments” in the relationship between Turkey and Armenia. In May of 2023, Turkey closed its airspace to flights by Armenian aircraft in retaliation for raising a monument honoring Armenians who sought justice for the Armenian Genocide. Turkey also remains insistent on crippling Armenia’s territorial integrity by supporting Azerbaijan’s demands to carve out a sovereign corridor through Armenia’s province of Syunik, thus allowing for an unimpeded connection between Turkey and Azerbaijan. These actions demonstrate Turkey’s bad-faith intentions and deception in painting the ongoing negotiations as “a historic effort to normalize their relations” with Armenia.

The Armenian National Committee of America - Western Region does not and has never spoken for the Armenian Government; its mission has been to uplift and defend the Armenian Diaspora. The diaspora is an integral part of the Armenian nation, and its pursuit of justice shall not be silenced, especially during this crucial and fragile time in Armenian history. We are assured that our allies and stalwart supporters will not allow for the maligned foreign influence of the Turkish government to undermine their mandate to represent and serve their Armenian-American constituents, who have overwhelmingly called for an urgent response from policymakers to exhaust all possible efforts in light of Turkey and Azerbaijan’s pan-Turkic agenda to continue the Armenian Genocide.

We thank the members of the California State Senate and Assembly for their principled support and friendship with the Armenian-American community as it continues to pursue justice for the unaccounted actions of Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Sincerely,

Nora Hovsepien, Esq.
Chair

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