

Declaration by the Turkish Grand National Assembly

It is in the belief of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), that both Turkey's and Armenia's interests lie in reconciling Turkish and Armenian nations who have lived for centuries on the same territory in mutual tolerance and peace, in setting them free from being hostage to deep prejudices emanating from the war years, and in creating an environment which will enable them to share a common future based on tolerance, friendship and cooperation.

To this end, the Governing and the Main Opposition Parties have made a proposal which aims to shed light on historical facts through scientific research and to free history from being a burden for these two nations. This proposal envisages the establishment of a joint commission composed of historians from Turkey and Armenia, to open without any restriction to their national archives, to disclose the findings of their research, which will also cover the archives of related countries, to the international public and determination between two countries the establishment and working methods of the said commission.

The TGNA approves and fully supports this historical proposal.

The cooperation of the Government of Armenia is essential for implementing this initiative. In this respect, if Turkey and Armenia cannot look at history from a common perspective, the legacy that both parties would leave to their children and future generations will be nothing but feelings of prejudice, animosity and revenge.

Wisdom and logic command Turkey and Armenia not to be afraid of breaking the taboos by working jointly, and to face their history by uncovering all aspects of the human calamity they together experienced. This is a way to prevent the past from casting a shadow over our present and future.

The TGNA underlines the fact that this proposal by the Republic of Turkey should be considered, in essence, as a peace initiative. If Armenia wishes to establish good neighborly relations with Turkey and develop a basis for cooperation, it should not hesitate to accept Turkey's proposal for a joint evaluation of history.

The TGNA would also like to emphasize that all states and statesmen who wish to contribute to world peace and stability should leave aside domestic political considerations and look positively at Turkey's proposal based on reconciliation and commonsense. In this respect, those states which sincerely want to normalize the Turkish-Armenian relations and desire the establishment for peace and stability in the Caucasus, are expected to support this initiative, and to refrain, in particular, from activities that can weaken it.

On this connection, the responsibility primarily falls upon the countries which took decisions regarding the Armenian allegations in their Parliaments. If these countries attach importance, as they claim, to the improvement of the relations between Turkey and Armenia, they should demonstrate their good will and support our proposal to set up a joint commission of history between the two countries.

The TGNA considers this adoption, for political purposes, of decisions by foreign Parliaments regarding certain pages of Ottoman Armenians history which are still subject to discussion among world historians and to pass judgment, through legislation, on the veracity of a

specific version of a still disputed historical issue, as inappropriate, pointless, arbitrary and unjust acts and condemns them.

The TGNA stresses that those who think it is possible to impose on Turkey to rebuild its history on one-sided and misleading assessment of propaganda material through a campaign of intense international pressure and those who make their calculations on this presumption are totally mistaken, and declares that this, under no circumstances, will ever happen.