



Council of Turkish Canadians

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Ottawa, ON, March 9, 2010

Statement from The Council of Turkish Canadians (CTC):

CTC Disappointed with HFAC Support to

Anti-reconciliation Armenian lobby groups in the United States

The Council of Turkish Canadians denounces the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee for passing judgement on historical events that continue to be debated by scholars and which are expected to be investigated by an international commission to be formed by the Republics of Turkey and Armenia. The US Foreign Affairs Committee's approval of the resolution H. Res. 252, which attempts to label the Ottoman-Armenian tragedy of World War I as genocide, will only serve to pre-empt the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia. In the absence of a scholarly consensus or a legal decision by a competent court, it is unfortunate that some nationalist Armenian groups are able to influence political bodies to legislate history. Turks and Armenians need to come to terms with their painful part of their common history. But the way to do that is not by politicizing the issue through coarse ethnic lobbying.

This era was a tragic period in which too many innocent Turks, Armenians, and others lost their lives. We have to understand and respect the memory of all those who perished and draw the right lessons from history. What is required for this is a proper investigation of the facts and following the legal process required by international law. Passing judgment on such a complex period by a show of hands under the pressure of lobby groups may be politically convenient, but is morally unfair and historically objectionable.

Political bodies should not pretend to act as courts of law when a serious crime like genocide is concerned. Political expressions of support for one side of an on-going debate can only be a diversion from the just conclusion and will certainly not constitute a short cut to truth. The closeness of the vote (23 "yes" votes vs. 22 "no" votes) confirms that even in the US Congress, there is no political consensus on the issue.

US H. Res. 252 also puts at risk the ratification of the recently signed protocols to normalize the relationship between Turkey and Armenia. The protocols include forming a joint historical commission to investigate the events of 1915.

Even if unintended, such political treatment of a moral, legal and historical issue is deeply insulting to our identity and ancestry. It encourages groups who have, unfortunately, built their identity around anti-Turkish feelings and have locked themselves into a position that rejects reconciliation efforts. We hope the US Congress will resist acting in haste and will instead encourage Turks and Armenians in North America and around the world to work alongside the efforts of Turkey and Armenia to normalize their relations.

About the Council of Turkish Canadians

The CTC is a non-profit organization whose mandate is to advocate and promote on behalf of Canadians of Turkish origin.

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