

## THE LETTER WHICH WAS ADRESSED TO GERMAN PARLIAMENT

### ALMAN PARLAMENTOSU'NA YAZILAN MEKTUP

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### ABSTRACT

A parliamentary session to commemorate the centennial of the events of 1915 was held in the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag) in 2015. In his opening speech, the President of the Bundestag, Mr Norbert Lammert accused the Ottoman Empire of committing genocide against the Armenians during World War-I (WW-I). German President Joachim Gauck and many representatives from the coalition and the opposition parties also characterized the 1915 events as "genocide".

These coordinated efforts paved way for the German Parliament to pass a resolution accusing the Turks for a so called "Armenian genocide" and German Parliament approved this resolution on June 2, 2016.

When the intent of German Parliamentarians came to be known through the media, Union of Turkish Non-Governmental Organizations (UTNGO) prepared and sent a letter to the President of German Parliament as well as all the German parliamentarians to inform them that the genocide claims are baseless.

In this work, contents of the above-mentioned letter, allegations of the German Parliament and the realities of the Armenian claims, as well as the effects of that letter on the German parliamentarians and its consequences are evaluated.

**Keywords:** Resolution of German Parliament, Armenian Relocation, Armenian Claims

### ÖZ

1915 olaylarının 100. Yıldönümünde Alman parlamentosunda bir anma töreni yapılmıştır. Törende yaptığı açış konuşmasında Alman parlamento Başkanı Norbert Lambert; Osmanlı Devletini Birinci Dünya Savaşında Ermenilere karşı soykırım uygulamakla suçlamıştır. Alman Cumhurbaşkanı Joachim Gauck ile Alman koalisyon ve muhalefet partilerinin temsilcileri de aynı şekilde 1915 olaylarını soykırım olarak nitelendirmiştir.

Bu koordineli faaliyetler Alman Parlamentosunun Türkleri soykırım yapmakla suçlayan bir karar tasarısını görüşmesine zemin hazırlamış ve söz konusu tasarı 2 Haziran 2016'da Parlamentosunda kabul edilmiştir.

Alman parlamenterlerin bu konudaki niyetlerinin basın yayın kuruluşlarında yer alması üzerine Türkiye Sivil Toplum Birliği (TSTB) Alman Parlamentosuna ve tüm Alman parlamenterlere soykırım iddialarının asılsız olduğunu açıklayan bir mektup göndermiştir.

Bu çalışmada söz konusu mektubun muhtevası, Alman Parlamentosunun iddiaları ve gerçekler, mektubun Alman parlamenterler üzerindeki etkileri ve sonuçları ele alınarak değerlendirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Alman Parlamentosunun Kararı, Ermeni Sevk ve İskânı, Ermeni İddiaları

### 1. INTRODUCTION

During WW-I Armenian minority of the Ottoman Empire living along the Russian border showed great support to the invading Russian troops and spied and sabotaged against the Ottoman forces. Consequently German commanders consulted with the Ottoman Government and advised them to relocate the Armenians from the war zone. Right after these consultations, the law to relocate the Armenians was put into effect by the Ottoman Government.

Upon losing the WW-I, not only the Ottoman Empire but Germany was also accused of this relocation decision. Nowadays Germany is trying to put the blame on the Turks to get rid of these accusations.<sup>1</sup>

After Hitler's rise to power in Germany, Armenians supported Germany and enlisted in the German army as well as among the SS troops. These Armenian actions caused an increase in Germany's support of Armenians. Nowadays the German Government's continuous support of the diaspora Armenians is increasing.<sup>2</sup>

The German Parliament has been accusing Turks of the so-called Armenian genocide since 2001. One of the most important reasons for these accusations is to find new accomplices and to dilute the memories of the Namibia massacre as well as the Holocaust which were committed by their ancestors. This was followed by several draft resolutions, which included the term "genocide". These were brought to the agenda of the Assembly in various occasions. However, they were delayed due to conjectural reasons.<sup>3</sup>

The German Federal Assembly had adopted another resolution in 2005, which did not include the word 'genocide', but was nevertheless accusatory of Turkey.<sup>4</sup>

Especially in 2015 (the centennial of the events of 1915) the number of statements against Turkey have increased.<sup>5</sup> A parliamentary session to commemorate the centennial of the events of 1915 was held in the German Federal Parliament (Bundestag). In his opening speech, the President of the Bundestag Mr. Norbert Lammert said, "What happened before the eyes of the world in the Ottoman Empire during the First World War was "genocide". Many lawmakers from the coalition and the opposition also made statements characterizing the 1915 events as "genocide"<sup>6</sup>

German President Joachim Gauck attended a mass remembrance ceremony commemorating "the genocide of Armenians, Assyrians and Pontic Greeks" held at the Berlin Cathedral on 23 April 2015 and described the 1915 events as "genocide".<sup>7</sup>

The latest resolution of the German Parliament on the Armenian issue was discussed on June 2, 2016. In this session German parliament has approved a resolution declaring that the mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks during WW-I was "genocide".<sup>8</sup>

The five-page paper, co-written by parliamentarians from the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Green party, calls for a "commemoration of the genocide of Armenian and other Christian minorities in the years 1915 and 1916". It passed with support from all the parties in parliament. In a show of hands, there was one abstention and one vote against.<sup>9</sup> Only one MP, a member of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Party, voted against it.

Prior to the German parliament session Şükrü Server Aya, the president of FEYM Group (Turkish group established to fight unjust Armenian allegations), and Union of Turkish Non-Governmental Organizations (UTNGO) as well as Turkish individuals (and Talat Pasa Committee among others that we know of) prepared and sent letters to the German Parliament to inform that the genocide claims were baseless. The letter of UNTGO was not only addressed to the President of the German parliament, but also to the German political parties and to all the members of the Federal Parliament.

I would like to thank Ret. Minister of State Sadi Somuncuoğlu, and Eng. Fatma Sarıkaya for their support to prepare this letter.

UTNGO's letter consists of eight sections which are "Preface", "When did the Armenian issue come to the force, what is the truth behind it", "Bloody Betrayal and Ethnic Cleansing during the First World War", "The Armenian side does not respect treaties, restarting its campaign of terror", "Armenian terror against the

<sup>1</sup> Ömer Lütfi Taşcıoğlu, Almanya'nın Osmanlı Devleti Dönemindeki Ermeni Politikaları (Armenian Politics of Germany in the Period of Ottoman Empire), Gazi Türkiyat, Güz 2016/19, p. 189

<sup>2</sup> Ömer Lütfi Taşcıoğlu, Almanya'nın Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Dönemindeki Ermeni Politikaları (Armenian Politics of Germany in the Period of Turkish Republic), Gazi Türkiyat, Güz 2017/21, p. 97

<sup>3</sup> Ali Murat Taşkent, German Federal Assembly's Unfriendly Resolution Towards Turkey And Turkish People, AVİM, Commentary No : 2016 / 33, 14.06.2016

<sup>4</sup> Taşkent, ibid

<sup>5</sup> Ali Murat Taşkent, Germany at the Forefront of Anti-Turkism, AVİM, Commentary No : 2015 / 83, 24.06.2015

<sup>6</sup> Taşkent, ibid; <http://www.dw.com/tr/alman-meclisi-soyk%C4%B1r%C4%B1m-dedi/a-18406062>

<sup>7</sup> Taşkent, ibid; Ömer Engin Lütem, "Joachim Gauck and Turkey", AVİM, [http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlar\\_duyurular/en/JOACHIM-GAUCK-AND-TURKEY/4075](http://www.avim.org.tr/yorumnotlar_duyurular/en/JOACHIM-GAUCK-AND-TURKEY/4075)

<sup>8</sup> German MPs recognise Armenian "genocide" amid Turkish fury, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36433114>, 2 June 2016

<sup>9</sup> Philip Oltermann & Constanze Letsch, Turkey recalls ambassador after German MPs' Armenian genocide vote, The Guardian, 2 June 2016

Turkish diplomats”, “The Position of the law regarding the resolution of this two-century long problem”, “Two witnesses, two civilized statements” and “Conclusion”.

At the end of the letter UTNGO emphasized that seeing the German parliamentarians as representatives of civilization, UTNGO is putting forth that politicians cannot pass judgement on issues which are under the authority of courts of law; therefore, UTNGO called on the German parliamentarians to reject the baseless, one sided Armenian claims.

## 2. THE CONTENT OF THE LETTER

For the attention of the members of the German Federal Parliament 19 May 2016

### Esteemed Member of the German Federal Parliament,

We have learnt of the developments relating to the possibility of the Armenian allegations being discussed in the German parliament. In the framework of international law, human rights, peace, stability and security we would like to bring some information to your attention. We address those who respect justice, sovereignty, democracy and freedoms and who wish to know the truth behind this issue.

### When did the Armenian issue come to the fore, what is the truth behind it?

The Turks and Armenians came into contact with each other beginning in the 11th Century and these two peoples lived with each other in peace and tranquillity until the end of the 19th Century. The Armenian question began with the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca and the article of the 1878 Berlin Treaty which permitted Russia, France, England and Germany to interfere in the domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire as the protectorate of the Armenian populations under the Ottoman suzerainty. The Armenians began organising for an independent state as a result of the intrigues of the aforementioned states. Subsequently the Armenians began to establish armed revolutionary committees, the most notable of which are the Ramgavar Party founded in 1885, the Hunchak Party founded in 1886 and the Dashnak Party founded in 1890. The programme of the aforementioned organisations was the foundation of an **“independent Armenia in Eastern Anatolia”** and to achieve this goal their openly stated tactics were to incite rebellion and conduct campaigns of terror.<sup>10</sup>

The Armenian writer M. Varantyan in his work *The History of the Dashnak Party* explains the political programme of the Armenian committees as follows: **“the aim of the organisation is to incite rebellion and as a consequence of this rebellion to gain independence or freedom as in Bulgaria and Lebanon.”**<sup>11</sup> The slogan of the committees was **“Kill the Turks and Kurds wherever you find them. Kill reactionaries, those who aren’t true to their word, Armenian collaborators and attain your revenge.”**<sup>12</sup>

Consequently, a clear agenda which seeks to exploit Armenian sensitivities both past and present is at play – previously against the Ottoman Empire and currently against the Republic of Turkey.

### Bloody Betrayal and Ethnic Cleansing during the First World War

The Armenian armed rebellions began in 1860 with the support of foreign powers and continued until World War One. During and after the war these rebellions had eventually taken the form of massacres. The Armenian rebels took the side of foreign powers against their own state. The war effort was severely hampered by the raiding of military depots, attacking of supply chains and the cutting of telegraph lines.<sup>13</sup> Widespread massacres against Turkish civilians terrified the populace, forcing 1.5 million of them to migrate further west – the aim of this was to secure an Armenian majority in areas where the Armenians had previously constituted a minority. The Russian historian Irandust in his work *Kemalist Devrimin İtici Güçleri* argued that, **“the armed Dashnak units, formed on the initiative of the French, had carried out mass murder against the Turkish population (...) The Armenian gangs massacred entire villages one by one. Their programme to eliminate the Turkish population was carried out purposely and consciously by the administration of the foreign occupation forces.”**<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Livre Bleu du Gouvernement Britannique Concernant le Traitement des Arméniens Dans Le’empire Ottoman 1915-1916 (Blue Book).

<sup>11</sup> Ömer Lütfi Taşcıoğlu; Türk-Ermeni ilişkilerinde Tarihi, Siyasi ve Hukuki Gerçekler, Ankara, 2015, p. 51; İhsan Sakarya, Belgelerle Ermeni Sorunu, Genelkurmay ATASE Yayınları, Ankara, 1984, p.87

<sup>12</sup> Azmi Süslü, “ Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı”, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi rektörlüğü Yayın No:5, Ankara, 1990, p.55; M. Varantyan, Taşnaksutyun Tarihi, p.78-80-85

<sup>13</sup> Ermeni Komitelerinin Amaçları ve İhtilal Hareketleri, Genelkurmay Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etütler Başkanlığı Yayınları, Ankara, 2003, p. 164.

<sup>14</sup> Mehmet Perinçek, “Rus Devlet Arşivlerinden 150 Belgede Ermeni Meselesi, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, 2012, p.228, Belge No:100; Irandust, Dvijuşie Sili Kemalistkoy Revolyutsii, Gosudarstvenoe İzdatelstvo, Moskova-Leningrad, 1928, p. 67,69 vd

The Ottoman government began to relocate Armenian citizens to Syria and Lebanon, which at that time were also constituent parts of the Ottoman Empire, to mitigate the possibility of further military losses. The government issued the Relocation and Resettlement Law (Sevk ve İskân Kanunu) in line with contemporary military practice in cases of irregular warfare. Approximately 600,000 persons were resultantly forced to migrate. During the relocation, great tragedies were experienced. Approximately 48,000 persons perished - mostly as the result of sickness and cold weather conditions but also as a result of attacks by bands and those seeking revenge.<sup>15</sup>

### **The Armenian side does not respect treaties, restarting its campaign of terror**

At the conclusion of World War One in 1918, the Armenians sought to benefit from the surrender of Ottoman forces by migrating back to their ancestral lands in Anatolia. There they began a campaign of mass murder against the Turkish populace. This continued until 1920. With the final defeat of Armenian forces by the army of Kazım Karabekir Pasha, the 1920 treaties of Alexandropol and Moscow, Treaty of Kars in 1921 and finally the 1923 Lausanne Treaty secured the present borders of Turkey and guaranteed peace.

This period can be summarised as follows: between 1860 and 1920, that is to say for sixty years, the western powers managed to fool the Armenians with the pledge of “founding a state between the two seas” (Black Sea and Mediterranean Sea).<sup>16</sup> This resulted in the Armenians attacking the state with the dream of establishing their own state in eastern Anatolia.<sup>17</sup> For their own part, the Turks took the position of defending their homeland. Expressed more tragically, the Armenian issue is a story of an unjust aggressor and a righteous victim.

### **Armenian terror against the Turkish Diplomats**

The peace secured at the Lausanne Conference lasted for fifty years - in 1973 *the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA)* emerged onto the world stage. Between the years 1973 and 1985, they were responsible for the murders of over 45 Turkish diplomats and personnel. Between the years 1988-1995, the Republic of Armenia occupied 20% of Azerbaijan's land. During the same period, the Armenian government carried out ethnic cleansing. In one single night six-hundred and thirteen (613) women, children and elderly persons were massacred in the settlement of Khojaly and in general over 1 million Azeri Turks were displaced.<sup>18</sup> The world has stood idly by in the face of these occupations, massacres and ethnic cleansing for twenty-two years. It should also be noted that the very same western powers that utilised Armenian gangs in their drive to dismember the Ottoman Empire have also rendered their support for these crimes against international law and against humanity.

### **The Position of the Law Regarding the Resolution of this Two-Century Long Problem**

1. During 1916 the Ottoman government tried one thousand three hundred and ninety seven (1397) persons in the employment of the state who had been negligent and co-operated with those who had attacked Armenian civilians during the relocations; sixty-seven (67) of those received the death penalty.<sup>19</sup> The others received various heavy penalties. This begs the question as to how a state charged with “systematically massacring the Armenians” can subsequently punish those who had played a role in attacks on civilians.<sup>20</sup>
2. **The decision of the United Kingdom:** During the occupation of Istanbul after World War One, the armed forces of the United Kingdom arrested several prominent figures including leaders of the wartime Ottoman government and exiled them to Malta. An international court was established under the direction of a British judge named Woods with the purpose of trying these persons in relation to the Armenian issue. After an inconclusive two year search of the Ottoman, English, American, Egyptian and Iraqi state archives, the charges were dropped on 29 July 1921 due to lack of evidence.<sup>21</sup> This decision is important because it was taken at a time when the Ottomans had been defeated. That is to say during a period when the events, witnesses and archival documents were in

<sup>15</sup> Yusuf Halaçoğlu, *Ermeni Tehciri ve Gerçekler(1914-1918)*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları Sayı 90, Ankara, p. 77

<sup>16</sup> Perinçek, *ibid*, p.228; ; İrandust, *Dvižušie Silı Kemalistskoy Revolyutsii, Gosudarstvenoe İzdatelstvo, Moskova-Leningrad, 1928, p. 67,69* vd

<sup>17</sup> A. B. Karinyan, *Ermeni Milliyetçi Akımları*, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, 2006, p.14

<sup>18</sup> Aygün Attar, *Karabağ Sorunu Kapsamında Ermeniler ve Ermeni Siyaseti*, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu, Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara, 2005, p.145

<sup>19</sup> Azmi Süslü, *Ermeniler ve 1915 Tehcir Olayı*, Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi Rektörlüğü Yayın No:5, Ankara, p.149-150; *Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi, Hazine-i Evrak, Karton 178, Dosya:23*

<sup>20</sup> Ferudun Ata, *İşgal İstanbul'unda Tehcir Yargılamaları*, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, Ankara, 2005, p.290

<sup>21</sup> Uluç Gürkan, *Malta Yargılaması, Özgün İngiliz Belgeleriyle*, İstanbul: Kaynak Yayınları, 2014, p. 89-90.

the open and the relevant foreign powers had access to them. No one who respects the rule of law can object to this. (See Attachment 1)

3. **The Decision of the European Court of Justice:** An Armenian association based in France opened a court case on the basis that as the “European Parliament had reached a decision that Turkey committed genocide, Turkey’s admission to the European Union must be suspended.” In its 29 October 2004 decision, the European Court of Justice noted that the European Parliament’s 1987 resolution regarding the “Armenian Genocide” was political and had no legal basis.<sup>22</sup>
4. **French Constitutional Court decision:** The decision taken by the French parliament on the initiative of Patrick Deveciyan to consider denial of the “Armenian genocide” as a crime was later annulled by the French Constitutional Court.<sup>23</sup>
5. **Decision of the International Court of Justice the relocation cannot be considered genocide:** In relation to a court case which Croatia instigated against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999, the ICJ decided that the relocation of persons, even by force, cannot be considered genocide.<sup>24</sup>
6. **European Court of Human Rights decision:** the European Court of Human Rights in its decision dated 15.10.2015 regarding the Perinçek-Switzerland case noted that the forced relocation of Armenians in 1915 cannot be considered genocide in light of international law.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of the decisions in the aforementioned court cases, the continued persecution of Turks in relation to this issue can only be summarised as a lack of respect for the law.

### Two witnesses, two civilised statements

The leader of the Dashnak Committee and the Republic of Armenia’s first Prime Minister Hovhannes Kajtchaznuni in his 1923 report delivered in Bucharest to Dashnak congress noted that:

“We were in the process of demanding an Armenia that would span from sea to sea (between the Black Sea and Mediterranean). In the end we fought relentlessly with the Turks. We died and also killed... we joined military operations. We were fooled and casted in our lot with the Russians. The deportations were both correct and necessary. We were unable to see the truth – we were responsible for the events which unfolded. The Turkish national struggle was just. Rejecting peace and taking up arms was our biggest mistake. The Treaty of Sèvres made us blind to reality. The basis of our rebellion was the dream of a ‘Greater Armenia’; we were oblivious to the fact that this has no basis in reality. The driving force of our rebellion was the Armenia promised to us by the Allied States.”<sup>26</sup>

Dikran Kevorkyan, the head of Istanbul’s Kandilli Church Foundation, noted in 2007 that: “During the First World War the English, Germans and French and on the other hand the Russians used the Armenians as a pawn. The imperialist powers coupled with the actions of some Armenians in positions of responsibility caused these events. What could ASALA and the PKK have done without the support of imperialist powers? Turkey is the greatest country in the world where the Armenians live in tranquillity and in conditions suitable for the protection of their identity.”<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> “Order Of The Court Of First Instance, 17 December 2003 (Non-Contractual Liability of the Community - Action Manifestly Lacking Any Foundation in Law), Case T-346/03” (Court of Justice of the European Union, December 17, 2003), <http://curia.europa.eu/juris/document/document.jsf?text=&docid=48869&pageIndex=0&doclang=EN&mode=lst&dir=&occ=first&part=1&cid=407605>

<sup>23</sup> Decision of French Constitutional Court No: 1959/2016/2015-512 <http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/2016/2015-512-qpc/decision-n-2015-512-qpc-du-8-janvier-2016.146840.html>

<sup>24</sup> “Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (Croatia v. Serbia) - Summary of the Judgment of 3 February 2015” (International Court of Justice, February 3, 2015), <http://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/118/18450.pdf>, 24.

<sup>25</sup> “Perinçek v. Switzerland - 27510/08 Judgment 17.12.2013 [Section II]” (European Court of Human Rights, December 17, 2013), [https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{"itemid":\["002-9265"\]}](https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#{) (Legal summary of the Second Chamber’s verdict regarding the Perinçek v. Switzerland Case)

<sup>26</sup> Ovanes Kaçaznuni, Taşnak Partisi’nin Yapacağı Bir Şey Yok, Kaynak Yayınları, İstanbul, 2005, p. 4-5; The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaksoution) Has Nothing to Do Any More, Armenian Information Service”, New York, 1955

<sup>27</sup> Ermeni Kevorkyan;”Hepimiz Ermeniyiz” diyenleri nefretle kınıyorum, A.A; <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/ermeni-kevorkyan-hepimiz-ermeni-yiz-diyenleri-nefretle-kiniyorum-6395564>

### 3. CONCLUSION

The Armenian attacks and massacres which have relentlessly continued from the 1860s onwards cannot simply be restricted to discussions regarding the relocations of 1915 alone. Likewise, they cannot mask the necessity of coming to terms with those bearing responsibility for the tragedies lived.

The aforementioned legal judgements and the flow of history are in the open and cannot be hidden. Parliaments and national governments can neither act in the capacity of historians nor as courts of law – because judgement can only be passed by courts alone. A path which can re-affirm Turkish and Armenian friendship must be established as the Armenians have been exploited for two centuries. Armenians must also come to terms with their own history and abandon hatred of Turks. For their own part, the Turks have always shown themselves to be on the side of peace.

The drive to hold the baseless allegations of the Armenians on the public agenda does no service to the developing of positive relations between the neighbouring states of Turkey and Armenia. On the contrary, it contributes to a lack of trust and more than anyone, it is the Armenian people who suffer as a result of this.

#### **Esteemed Member of the German Federal Parliament,**

Seeing yourselves as representatives of civilisation, we are putting forth that politicians cannot pass judgement on issues which are under the authority of courts of law; therefore we call on you to reject the baseless claims of the Armenians. We thank you for your understanding.

#### **TOGETHER WE ARE THE TURKISH NATION MOVEMENT / ON BEHALF OF 632 ACADEMICS AND INTELLECTUALS**

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### 4. EFFECTS OF THE LETTER AND COMBINED TURKISH EFFORTS ON GERMAN PARLIAMENT AND THEIR CONSEQUENCES

The letters' and the combined Turkish efforts' effects on the government were more prominent than on the German parliamentarians. Most of the government officials including chancellor, vice-chancellor, and the foreign minister have not attended to that session of the German parliament during the voting. This could be assumed as a sign that the German government is not on the same page with the parliamentarians who supported the resolution.<sup>28</sup> But critics have said that German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier, and the leader of the Social Democrats, Sigmar Gabriel deliberately attempted to dodge a difficult vote.<sup>29</sup> Chancellor Angela Merkel said: "There is a lot that binds Germany to Turkey and even if we have a difference of opinion on an individual matter, the breadth of our links, our friendship, our strategic ties, is great."<sup>30</sup>

Turkish Prime Minister Binali Yıldırım was quoted as saying that the German resolution was "ridiculous." He had previously called the parliamentary vote a "test of friendship" between the two countries.<sup>31</sup> He has also called Turkey's Berlin ambassador Hüseyin Avni Karslıoğlu back to Ankara in response to the vote in the Bundestag and emphasized that Turkey had nothing in its past to be ashamed of.

The Turkish government bitterly opposed to labelling the "unfortunate death of its Armenian Citizens due to WW-1" as genocide and said the German parliament's approval of the Armenian genocide bill was "null and void".<sup>32</sup>

Later, A spokesman for President Erdoğan said: "Having committed the largest genocide in modern history, Germany resorts to lies about Ottoman Armenians to relieve itself of guilt. In recent years, Armenia and supporters of the genocide claims failed to accept Turkish President's repeated offers to establish a joint commission to study the 1915 events based on archival materials."<sup>33</sup>

Relations between Turkey and Germany strained after the approval of the resolution and Turkey blocked German politicians from visiting German troops at İncirlik base in Turkey. Chancellor Angela Merkel's

<sup>28</sup> Taşkent, German Federal Assembly's Unfriendly Resolution Towards Turkey And Turkish People, AVİM, Commentary No : 2016 / 33, 14.06.2016

<sup>29</sup> Bundestag passes Armenia 'genocide' resolution unanimously, Turkey recalls ambassador, <https://www.dw.com/en/bundestag-passes-armenia-genocide-resolution-unanimously-turkey-recalls-ambassador/a-19299936>, 2 June 2016

<sup>30</sup> German MPs recognise Armenian 'genocide' amid Turkish fury, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36433114>, 2 June 2016

<sup>31</sup> Rick Noack, Turkey protests Germany's recognition of Armenian "genocide", The Washington Post, June 2, 2016

<sup>32</sup> Philip Oltermann & Constanze Letsch, Turkey recalls ambassador after German MPs' Armenian genocide vote, The Guardian, 2 June 2016

<sup>33</sup> Oltermann&Letsch, ibid

official spokesman called Turkey's refusal "unacceptable", warning that Germany could move its troops elsewhere.<sup>34</sup> After a while Turkey allowed the German parliamentarians to visit the German troops at the İncirlik Base but this step has not changed the decision of the German Parliament from withdrawing their troops from Turkey and relocating them to Jordan.<sup>35</sup>

A Turkish Lawyer Melih Akkurt sued at German Federal Constitutional Court against the decision of German Parliament, on June 8, 2016. But German Federal Constitutional Court refused the case. Subsequently Lawyer Melih Akkurt moved the case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) but ECHR also rejected the case.

The refusal of the case by two high courts despite the evidences which were in favour of the Turkish lawyer is unacceptable to the Turkish public.<sup>36</sup>

This biased attitude of the German and European courts prove that the political decisions of the parliaments on the Armenian issue will continue. But they have realized that to accuse Turks of baseless claims will not be as easy as it was in the past and Turkish governments and Non- Governmental Organizations like UTNGO and FEYM Group and even the individuals will continue to resort to legal remedies against the parliamentary decisions of the countries supporting the baseless Armenian claims in the future.

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