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Deportation Threats Bring Up Memories of 1915

Ottawa – On Thursday March 11, the Parliament of Sweden, recognized the Armenian Genocide after a long debate with a vote of 131 to 130. Turkey immediately elected to recall its ambassador to Sweden, Zergün Korutürk, who said she was “very, very disappointed” by the vote. On Wednesday, 17 March in an interview with BBC, Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, threatened to deport 100,000 Armenian migrants. He explained that of 170,000 Armenians living in Turkey “70,000 are Turkish citizens”. He added that “We are turning a blind eye to the remaining 100,000... Tomorrow, I may tell these 100,000 to go back to their country, if it becomes necessary.”

The Armenian National Committee agrees with the Prime Minister of Armenia, Tigran Sarkisian, who argued in the Armenian Parliament the same day that Mr Erdogan's comments only reminded Armenians of the mass killings. He said “When the Turkish prime minister allows himself to make such statements it immediately for us brings up memories of the events of 1915.”

Once again Turkey has chosen the politics of threats to face the growing pressure by the international community for its denial of the Armenian Genocide. A few months ago Mr. Erdogan and President Abdullah Gul prided themselves on accepting these Armenian workers as “so-called” indicators of democracy and friendship with Armenia. In May 2009 Prime Minister Erdogan criticized Turkish nationalism at the Annual Congress of his Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Duzce, North-western Turkey. In his speech, on May 23, Mr. Erdogan called the Kemalist foundation of Turkey “fascist” because of the ethnic cleansing of the Armenian, Greek, Jewish, Kurdish, Assyrian and other minorities by the Turkish Government and added that “For years, those of different identities have been kicked out of our country... This was not done with common sense. This was done with a fascist approach,” Erdogan said at the AKP conference. Less than a year later, on March 19, 2010 Mr. Erdogan in a speech delivered in the city of Canakkale not only once again did he deny the Armenian Genocide,

but he dared to accuse of the Armenians of committing Genocide. “In 1915 and before that, it was the Armenian side that pursued a policy aimed at exterminating our people which led to hunger, misery and death,” he said. He added “Forgetting all that is unfair and heartless. Our warriors always respected ancestral laws and did not kill innocent people even on the battlefield.”

Once again we are utterly disgusted of this new wave of racist expressions and using innocent civilians as political cards.

Dr. Girair Basmadjian, the President of the Armenian National Committee of Canada, commented on this issue, he stated that “We are used to see Turkish politicians accusing the Armenian diaspora, the Armenian Republic, foreign states, Turkish and foreign intellectuals that recognize the Armenian Genocide. Now that the pressure on Turkey to recognize the Armenian Genocide has become stronger after the resolution in the Swedish Parliament and the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee, Resolution–H.R. 252, which passed by a vote of 23 to 22, the Turkish government has turned to what it knows best, to threaten everyone and create a culture of hatred for its people, just like it did during World War I and blamed Armenians for its defeats at the hands of Russians. In 1915 the Armenians were eventually murdered and forcibly marched into the desert of Der Zor in Syria, I am wondering whether, now that Turkey is under immense pressure, it is right to respond with threats of new deportations.” Dr. Basmadjian added that Prime Minister Erdogan seems to not know what he is talking about and has no principles. “Mr. Erdogan should finally decide whether his country's foundation is fascist or as mentioned above, it “respected ancestral laws and did not kill innocent people even on the battlefield.””

The ANCC is the largest and the most influential Canadian-Armenian grassroots political organization. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters throughout Canada and affiliated organizations around the world, the ANCC actively advances the concerns of the Canadian-Armenian community on a broad range of issues.

Le CNAC est l'organisation politique canadienne-arménienne la plus large et influente. Collaborant avec une série de bureaux, chapitres et souteneurs à travers le Canada et des organisations affiliées à travers le monde, le CNAC s'occupe activement des inquiétudes de la communauté canadienne-arménienne.