



## **Armenian National Committee of Canada Comité National Arménien du Canada**

130 Albert St., Suite/Bureau 1007  
Ottawa, ON  
K1P 5G4

Tel./Tél. (613) 235-2622 Fax/Télé. (613) 238-2622  
E-mail/courriel: [national.office@anccanada.org](mailto:national.office@anccanada.org)  
[www.anccanada.org](http://www.anccanada.org)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Contact: Roupen Kouyoumdjian (B.Sc., M.Sc.)

## **And What About Human Rights Violations and State Terrorism in Turkey, Mr. Erdogan?**

Ottawa – On Tuesday June 1st, Turkey accused Israel of state-sponsored terrorism while describing Monday morning's Israeli attack on a fleet of ships carrying humanitarian aid to Gaza.

“This action, totally contrary to the principles of international law, is inhumane state terrorism. No one should think we will keep quiet in the face of this,” Erdogan said. He added that this attack openly and in a clear way displayed that Israel does not want peace in the region.

A few days later, on June 3, 2010, a Roman Catholic bishop was stabbed to death in southern Turkey, a day before he was scheduled to leave for Cyprus to meet with the pope, officials and reports said. Luigi Padovese, 63, the apostolic vicar in Anatolia, was attacked outside his home in the Mediterranean port of Iskenderun.

The following day, on June 4, 2010, Hakan Karadağ, the lawyer of Hrant Dink was found dead in his Istanbul apartment, in an apparent suicide yesterday. Reports said Karadağ's body was found hanging from the ceiling. Dink was a Turkish Armenian editor, journalist, columnist and editor-in-chief of the bilingual Turkish-Armenian newspaper Agos. He was best known for advocating Turkish-Armenian reconciliation, human and minority rights in Turkey; and was critical of Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide. He was prosecuted three times for denigrating Turkishness, while receiving numerous death threats from Turkish nationalists. Dink was assassinated in Istanbul in January 2007, by Ogün Samast, a 17-year old Turkish nationalist.

On June 5, at a demonstration organized in Istanbul by the Islamic Saadet Party, one of the banners read, in Turkish: "Legendary leader Hitler, our patience is running out, we need your spirit." Another one had a big swastika with the words "Ellerinize Saglik" (Well done!).

These incidents are the latest examples of how minorities in Turkey are threatened by the deep-state and how hatred, incitement to violence and outright anti-semitism is freely expressed in the streets of Istanbul. Commenting on these incidents, the President of the Armenian National Committee of Canada, Dr. Girair Basmadjian, said: "Minorities in Turkey are threatened by Turkish ultra-nationalists who are not hesitant to express their hatred towards so called non-Turks. Moreover, praising Hitler is very dangerous, Genocides have always begun by hate-speech and targeting minorities. While this is not to say that this will lead to another Genocide in Turkey, these incidents clearly show that Turkey is not yet the open and tolerant democratic country it portrays itself to be. Especially disturbing is the legal existence of the infamous Article 301 of the Turkish penal code which is used to prosecute - and in fact persecute under the banner of anti-turkishness - those who freely express their opinions on the issue of the Armenian Genocide. Is this not an evident and open form of state terrorism?"

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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.

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