
PRESS RELEASE: TURKISH AMERICAN GRASSROOTS SUCCEED IN SASSOUNIAN PAROLE DENIAL

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JOINT PRESS RELEASE

TASC commends the Turkish American and Turkish Australian communities for a unified grassroots campaign to deny release to Armenian Justice Commandos terrorist Hampig Sassounian, who assassinated Turkish Consul General Kemal Arikan on January 28, 1982. The grassroots effort ensured continued justice for the Arikan family who reside in Australia, Turkish Americans in California who face anti-Turkish and anti-Muslim activity from Armenian extremists on a daily basis, and Turkish and American diplomats who have died in the line of duty representing their countries on foreign soil.

At 4 pm Pacific Standard Time, on June 29, 2018, TASC Co-Chair Gunay Evinch exited Californias San Quentin Prison and called to commended California Turkish American leaders who co-signed TASCs joint opposition letter, including Mr. Ergun Kirlikovali who signed on behalf of TASC, ATASC Presidents Ms. Ayca Altinig and Ms. Burcu Tansu, ATASC-SD President Ms. Buket Perez, LATAA President Ms. Nilay Nyland, VATAN President Ms. Selda Souther, OCTAA President Mr. Erkan Demiragci, and Turkish American Anti-Defamation Alliance (TADA) President Mr. Sevgin Oktay.

Evinch who monitored the six-hour hearing reported that front and center before Parole Commissioner Robert Barton and Deputy Commissioner James Andres were the TASC Joint Letter in Opposition to Parole and case binders including more than 1700 letters submitted by TASCs campaign www.StopTerroristParole.org.

Evinch reported that Sassounian was escorted by prison guards to the parole room and seated 20 feet from Evinch, Los Angeles County Assistant District Attorney Anne Ingalls, and Turkish Republic Consul General Can Oguz. Sassounians lawyer, Mark Geragos, was substituted out and replaced by habeas corpus specialist, Attorney Susan Jordan.

Following the consideration of Sassounians pre-crime life, the assassination itself, and post conviction life, Commissioners Barton and Andres denied parole on the ground that Sassounian posed an unreasonable risk of violence if permitted to re-enter free society:

The internet campaign in opposition to Sassounians release demonstrated the national and international impact of Sassounians crime. As email submissions are not accepted into the Central File, TASC printed and hand delivered more than 1700 opposition letters, of which more than 700 were from California residents, 400 from the rest of the United States and Canada, and 200 from

eastern Australia where the widow Mrs. Arikian resides with her children.

Sassounian's high public profile in Armenian political activism, even from prison, and his 2012 and 2013 articles in the Hay Zinvor Armenian military magazine, expressing his intention to join the armed conflict and invasion of Azerbaijan, demonstrated that he was a hero in the Armenian community and posed a risk of inciting violence. The hero factor was further supported by the fact that Sassounian in his own words fired several rounds of bullets into Consul General Arikian's body to make sure he was dead -- to make sure Sassounian was a hero.

Sassounian implausibly denied knowledge of his own brother, Harut Sassounian's fire bombing of Consul General Kemal Arikian's home one year prior to Arikian's eventual assassination.

Sassounian implausibly denied knowledge of and participation in the Armenian Justice Commandos (JCAG) terrorist organization, which during and after the time of Sassounian's assassination of Turkish Consul General Kemal Arikian, had committed over 150 acts of terrorism, killing over 40 Turkish diplomats and more than 40 civilians, including Americans. JCAG was the armed wing of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (ARF) Armenian political party, which is represented by the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) in America. Sassounian and his crime partner, Viktor Saliba, were members of and took weapons training at ARF's youth division, the Armenian Youth Federation (AYF). Sassounian, let alone ARF, AYF and ANCA have never denounced JCAG and ASALA Armenian terrorism.

To the extent Sassounian engaged in this denialism, he did not demonstrate maturity and a full understanding and implications of his crime. The Commissioners, who were also experts on gangs and organized crime, stated Sassounian's silence was similar to how gang members take the truth with them to the grave.

Sassounian's eventual verbal assault against the California Parole Board Commissioners, claiming he was a victim of unfair questioning, was interpreted by the Commissioners as manipulative.

Following his denial, Sassounian was escorted by guards out of the parole room.

Kaynak/Source: