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## **AUSTRALIA TO SEEK ARMENIAN TERRORISTS BEHIND 1980 KILLING OF TURKISH DIPLOMATS**

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18.12.2019

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Daily Sabah (17 December 2019)

by Dilara Aslan

Australian police have reopened the murder case of two Turkish diplomats working at the Sydney Consulate in 1980. The police announced a \$1 million reward for those that can provide information on the killing of Consul General Şarık Arıyak and military attaché Engin Sever by an Armenian terror cell.

A commemoration ceremony was held in front of the Sydney consulate general's residence on Dec. 17, marking the 39th anniversary of the murders of the two diplomats. Over the course of the ceremony, it was stressed that the multicultural nature of the country meant there ought to be no tolerance for such acts.

It was the first international politically motivated attack on Australian soil, according to the Sydney Morning Herald. The Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) group claimed responsibility for the act, but no one was ever charged. The consul general was shot 17 times as he was leaving his house on Portland Street in Sydney in the morning, having just said goodbye to his wife and daughter. The victims were leaving the residence in separate vehicles when they were approached by two men who fired multiple shots at close range before fleeing by motorcycle.

Armenian terrorist groups were responsible for a number of attacks and killings, which started in the 1970s and gained prominence over the course of the 1980s. Some 42 Turkish diplomats were killed by Armenian terrorist organizations during that time.

These groups were mainly composed of the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG) and the Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA).

Killings targeting Turkish diplomatic missions were perpetrated around the world, including the U.S., Britain, Austria, France, Italy, Belgium, the Vatican, Spain, Lebanon, Greece, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Portugal and Iran.

The reopening of the case after 39 years could point to a development regarding the obtainment of new information. The name of a suspect or critical information could have been acquired, Ömer Kablan, a TRT World correspondent, told Daily Sabah, adding that the Turkish consulate and

embassy in Australia have been pressuring authorities to reopen the investigation into the murders.

New South Wales (NSW) assistant commissioner Mark Walton held a press conference following the commemoration ceremony announcing that a special team had been formed within the local police anti-terror unit. "Both Mr. Ariyak and Mr. Sever's families have gone almost 40 years without knowing who the culprits were □ and I hope this reward can help bring them the answers they have been seeking," he said.

Walton also thanked Çağla Ariyak, the daughter of the former consul general, for coming to Sydney for the first time since the death of her father to help solve the murder. She was only 8 years old and attended Rose Bay Primary School when the incident took place. She told an Anadolu Agency (AA) reporter that she was happy for the efforts made to find the terrorists by the local Turkish community, the police and the Australian people.

"We were home, my father gave me a kiss, then gave my mum a kiss, and we went to the door to say goodbye. It's a Turkish custom to stand at the door and wave goodbye ... then that's what happened," she said. "It was, of course, quite a shock □ it happened in front of us. Devastating, worse than awful ... I can't describe it, she said, explaining that she was quickly taken to their neighbor but continued to watch what was going on from the window.

Turkey's ambassador to Canberra, Korhan Karakoç, stated that he hoped Australian police would come to a conclusion by employing new tactics and techniques while revisiting the information and documents linked to the case.

Recalling that the file of the murder had been opened in 1980 and closed three years later due to lack of evidence, Kablan said: The police said that a new budget was formed for unsolved murders that will be reinvestigated with new intelligence technologies. Since it was the first politically motivated murder in the country, it is seen as highly important. Most probably, there could be a development and even an arrest next year.

Kablan also stressed that the reopening of the case drew the attention of the Australian public and that many national media channels had attended the ceremony, enhancing the possibility of gathering new information as the news would spread widely. The police spoke positively on the possibility of new information, he added.

In a report of the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) released by the National Archives of Australia after the incident, the organization stated its concern over the attack.

In 1983, while ASIO was trying to track down those responsible for the Sydney attack, investigators discovered that JCAG was planning another attack on Australia. ASIO also said JCAG prepared its operations carefully, sometimes over 12 months. Three years later, Turkey's Melbourne consulate was car bombed in 1986, which showed clearly that ASIO was right in its concerns.

Founded in 1975, ASALA was the first Armenian terrorist group to wage war against Turkey. It not only targeted Turkey but also other countries and became infamous for a 1975 bomb attack on the Beirut office of the World Council of Churches. The JCAG, on the other hand, was formed in 1975 in Beirut. Since the mid-1970s, ceremonies have been held around the world in memory of Turkish officials, diplomats, their families and innocent people of all nationalities who have been victims of

Armenian terrorists. ASALA and other Armenian terrorist groups have cited what is referred to as a "genocide" that allegedly occurred in 1915 as a pretext for their murderous campaign.

Turkey's position on the events of 1915 is that the deaths of Armenians in eastern Anatolia took place when some sided with invading Russians and revolted against Ottoman forces. A subsequent relocation of Armenians resulted in numerous casualties. Ankara does not accept the alleged genocide but acknowledges that there were casualties on both sides during the events of World War I.

<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2019/12/17/australia-to-hunt-down-armenian-terrorists-behind-1980-killing-of-turkish-diplomats>

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