



AVRASYA  
İNCELEMELERİ  
MERKEZİ  
CENTER FOR  
EURASIAN STUDIES

---

## GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA/USA NEWSOM DENIES SASSOUNIAN PAROLE

- 27.05.2020

---

Asbarez (27 May 2020)

Despite a recommendation in December by the Board of Parole in favor of Hampig Sassounians suitability, Governor of California/USA Gavin Newsom on Tuesday rejected that decision and denied his parole, saying in a lengthy decision that while he acknowledged the steps Sassounian had taken over decades to rehabilitate himself, he did not believe Sassounian to be fit for release.

I commend Mr. Sassounian for his rehabilitative efforts in prison, but I find they are outweighed by negative factors that show he remains unsuitable for parole at this time, said Newsom in his letter obtained by Asbarez on Tuesday.

I believe that Mr. Sassounian has not yet demonstrated that he has developed and sustained the necessary insight and skills for a sufficiently long period. In particular, I am concerned that Mr. Sassounian has continued to underestimate the vigilance that is required of him, now and in the future, to consistently conduct himself in a manner that promotes the rule of law and avoids fomenting violence, even inadvertently, added Newsom.

After reviewing and considering the evidence in the record, I believe that Mr. Sassounian must do additional work before he can be safely released. Accordingly, I find that he still poses an unreasonable danger to society if released and I reverse the Boards decision to parole Mr. Sassounian, Newsom concluded in his letter.

We are extremely disappointed in Gov. Newsoms decision to reject the recommendation of the Parole Board and choose to deny Hampig Sassounian the freedom he deserves, the Hampig Sassounian Defense Committee told Asbarez soon after the governors decision was published.

Throughout the decades that he has spent in prison, Hampig has taken every conceivable step to rehabilitate himself and has been a model prisoner, a fact that the governor himself acknowledges in his decision, added the Hampig Sassounian Defense Committee. We hope that, like in previous instances, the governor was not swayed by pressure from the Turkish government, which used the White House to do its bidding.

We are concerned that unjustified arguments have received greater consideration than the governors record on human rights and the experience we anticipated from the governor, the Defense Committee told Asbarez, adding that it will continue its efforts to seek other avenues for Sassounias release.

In 2016, Sassounian was granted parole only to see it be rejected in 2017 by then governor Jerry Brown, who cited letters he had received from then Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Attorney General Jeff Sessions opposing the parole.

Sassounian has been serving a life sentence when he was convicted in 1984 for the 1982 murder of Turkish Consul General to Los Angeles Kemal Arıkan. In 2002 a federal appeals court overturned a special circumstances finding in his sentence, making Sassounian eligible for parole after serving a minimum of 25 years. Sassounian has now served 38 years. Sassounian will be eligible for parole in 18 months.

[http://asbarez.com/194376/governor-newsom-denies-sassounian-parole/?](http://asbarez.com/194376/governor-newsom-denies-sassounian-parole/)

---

Kaynak/Source: