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**STATEMENT ON NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PERMIT TO THE TURKISH AMERICAN NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE**

26.04.2019

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TASC represents the broadest diversity of Turkish Americans nationwide, secular and faith-based. TASC is a non-partisan group and supports strong U.S. – Turkish relations. We love our new homeland, America, and work to build bridges between America and Turkey.

The Turkish American National Steering Committee (TASC) thanks the National Park Service (NPS) for issuing Permit 19-0490 for the use of one-third of Sheridan Circle for a First Amendment Free Speech Assembly on April 24, 2019.

NPS designated another third for the Armenian National Committee of America Youth Federation (ANCA-AYF). NPS designated the middle third as a safe zone for law enforcement and media, acting as a barrier between the Armenian and Turkish American groups.

It is unfortunate that ANCA mischaracterized TASC as a hate group targeting Armenians protestors, and condemned the National Park Service for permitting TASC a Free Speech Permit. Congressman Pallone irresponsibly tweeted a hateful message against Turkish Americans, falsely accusing TASC of assault, and criticized NPS. These false representations incited hateful messages against Turkish Americans, and caused increased security measures to protect TASCs peaceful assembly and free speech exercise. Still, TASC believes that more measures are in proper order, and has registered its recommendations with the NPS.

As Justice Wendel Holmes stated, free speech is not for the speech we like to hear, but the speech which challenges us. Since 2005, Turkish Americans in Washington, DC have assembled on April 24 to increase awareness of:

Modern Armenian terrorism, that killed more than 70 Turkish diplomats, four on American soil, and injured more than 700, including a dozen in America;

The Armenian Revolt of 1885-1919, which caused the deaths and displacement of over 1.1 Million Ottoman Muslims and 100,000 Ottoman Jews on one side, and over 600,000 Armenians on the other side of a tragic domestic conflict;

Armenias violent invasion and occupation of western Azerbaijan, which has caused more than one million Azerbaijani refugees.

TASC regrets the tragic loss of life of its Armenian brethren during WWI, and again calls for reconciliation in the spirit of the Armenia – Turkey Protocols Historical Commission, which was supported by the United States, European Union, and Turkey.

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Kaynak/Source: