THE STATEMENT OF ARMENIAN NATIONALISTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS PUBLISHED IN THE FRENCH NEWSPAPER LIBERATION

AVİM

The hearings of two lawsuits regarding militant Armenian nationalists were held on October 17 in Paris and Nanterre. Upon AVIMs scholar in residence Maxime Gauins request, Ara Toranian and Sam Tilbian appeared in court at the lawsuit in Paris. For the second lawsuit, two militants were put on trial for throwing colored water at the Turkish Ambassador who was giving a conference at the Paris-Descartes University on March 2015 and for publishing this attack through social media. Armenian nationalists and their supporters have begun a campaign to create distortions during the course of these lawsuits. This attempt shows how the discussions regarding the 1915 events are being used for settling political scores when instead they should be progressing on a historical basis. The *Liberation* newspaper in France became a part of this campaign by publishing a statement. We are sharing with you the English translation of this statement below:

THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: NO TO THE INSTRUMENTALIZATION OF JUSTICE [FOR ILL-INTENT]

Liberation (10 October 2017)

The editor of "Armenia News" [Fr. Nouvelles dArménie] will appear in court on October 17th: Current French law does not allow for the denialists of the Armenian genocide to stand trial.

As Elie Wiesel has written: A murderer always kills twice, the second time with silence: denial perpetuates the genocide.

Even though every genocide has its own distinct features, denialism always uses the same vengeful mechanism. At every turn, denialism represents the same insult to the victims memory, the same provocation to the survivors and their grandchildren, the same injury to human dignity.

Thus, the editor of "Armenia News" Ara Toranian is comparing a denialist with another denialist, Shoah Robert Faurisson, like Pierre Vidal-Naquet has done before him. He had many valid reasons.

This lawsuit meant for slander to be held on October 17 at the Paris Criminal Court is

unacceptable for us.

While it should be the denialists on the chair of the accused, on the contrary, the people who are defending historical facts, honor, and memory will be put on trial.

French laws still do not allow for the Armenian genocide denialists to brought before justice. Additionally, must the denialists have the grandchildren of the victims be condemned while they [the denialists] are parrying the classification they deserve? This crude attempt to reverse the roles and to instrumentalize freedom of speech should be strongly condemned.

Protecting freedom of speech against those who would use it for malicious purposes, protecting the victims heirs from the persecution of the executioners grandchildren, not obstructing the transfer of the knowledge of historical facts; these are the main and symbolic aims of the trial that will begin on October 17.

We trust that justice of our country is at this level.

Among the signatories [AVİMs note: there is some confusion regarding names and titles due to the punctuation errors in the original text]: **Charles Aznavour**, **Bernard-Henri Lévy**, **Serge Klarsfeld**, **Beate Klarsfeld**, **Arno Klarsfeld**, **Michel Onfray**, **Pascal Bruckner**, **Frédéric Encel**, **Alain Terzian**, **Yann Moix**, **Dominique Sopo** (President of SOS Racisme), **Gérard Chaliand**, **Simone Rodan** (Director of American Jewish Committee), **Raymond Kévorkian**, **Yves Ternon**, **Erol Ozkoray** (writer), with the support of the executive office of **Le Crif Marseille-Provence**, **Didier Rebut** (Assas University law professor), **Claire Mouradian (**historian), **Marc Knobel** (Research Director of CNRS - Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), **Franz-Olivier Giesbert** , **Jacky Mamou** (President of Urgence-Darfour), **Marcel Kabanda** (Honorary President of Ibuka-France), **Bernard Schalscha** (Secretary General of France Syrie Démocratie), **Benjamin Abtan** (President of EGAM - European Grassroots Antiracist Movement), **Michaël Prazan** (writer and director), **Mohamed Sifaoui** (journalist, writer, director), **Valérie Igounet** (historian, author of Robert Faurisson: Portrait d'un négationniste [Robert Faurisson: Portrait of a denialist]), **François Heilbronn** (Vice President of Mémorial de la Shoah [Shoah Memorial]), **Robert Guédiguian** (film producer), **Eric Marty** (writer, academic), **Valérie Toranian** (Director of Revue des deux mondes ["Review of Two Worlds]), **Hamit Bozarslan** (historian, Research Director of EHESS - École des hautes études en sciences sociales), **Sacha Ghozlan** (President of UEJF - Union des étudiants juifs de France), **Fethi Benslama** (psychoanalyst, writer), **Richard Odier** (Secretary General of Simon-Wiesenthal Centre), **Robert Kechichian** (film producer), **Rudy Reichstadt** (Director of Observatoire du conspirationnisme), **Meïr Waintrater** (writer), and **Francis Kalifat** (President of Crif - Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France)

http://www.liberation.fr/amphtml/debats/2017/10/10/genocide-armenien-non-a-l-instrumentalisation-de-la-justice_1602152

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