ZAHAROVA ACTING AS A SPOKESPERSON FOR GENOCIDE ALLEGATIONS

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Recently, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made a statement regarding the 1915 Relocation and Resettlement Law and stated, We must understand what happened and why it happened, how we perceived it and through whom we perceived. How is it that in 1939 there was no Armenian genocide agenda and how is it that in 1950 the Armenian genocide agenda emerged?[1]

Pashinyan's statement caused considerable reactions both in the Armenian opposition and the Diaspora. Another reaction to his statements came from the Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zaharova. Zaharova criticized Pashinyans statements and said;

> To be honest, I never expected that this issue will be treated in a way different from the historically shaped, absolutely consensus-based position of both the state of Armenia and the people of Armenia and Armenians as an ethnic group. I never thought that this consolidated position formulated and formed for years will be subject to any changes within the Armenian polity. But you can see what statements we have been hearing lately. But this is not a question for us. Our country, our position was formulated through a corresponding statement by the State Duma which we regularly cite and which you know.[2]

Considering Russia's stance on the Relocation and Resettlement Law, Zaharova's statements are not surprising. Throughout history, Russia has not hesitated to use the genocide allegations as a trump card for the establishment of its dominance in the region. For this purpose, Russia's influence in the forging of an alternative historiography that distorts facts cannot be ignored.

Completed in 1967, the Tsitsernakaberd (Armenian Genocide Memorial) demonstrates that Armenians enjoyed a different status from other ethnic groups within the USSR. In fact, the USSR aimed to create an Armenian identity that was transformed on the basis of genocide and common suffering. Accordingly, Armenians were presented to the world

public opinion with the identity of the victim people who were subjected to genocide. In this way, a project has been presented to the world with two aims: 1) Gain support with the creation of a perception of genocide that did not previously exist in world public opinion, and 2) On occasion, use this support as a trump card against Türkiye.

Therefore, considering historical facts and today's conditions, Zaharovas continued defense of the resolution passed by the Duma in 1995 does not seem to be based on solemn consideration or good faith.

In conclusion, Zaharova's statements and Russias attempts to absolve itself of responsibility that was triggered by Pashinyan's insinuations are unsurprising. However, it makes one wonder what kind of reasons are behind the Spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs acting as a spokesperson for the genocide allegations while even the Armenian Prime Minister proposes for the said allegations to be investigated on the basis of historical facts. Countries are expected to act responsibly in their foreign policy actions. There is an ongoing process in which Türkiye and Armenia are trying to normalize their bilateral relations. Has it occurred to Zaharova while making her statement that such a biased third-party intervention by Russia may negatively affect this process and that the responsibility that may arise from the said process disruption would belong to Russia. Unfortunately, it appears that Zaharova has not contemplated on such a possibility.

[1] Tuğçe Tecimer ve Selenay Erva Yalçın, Paşinyanın Söylem Değişikliği, *AVİM*, 7 Şubat 2025, https://avim.org.tr/tr/Yorum/PASINYAN-IN-SOYLEM-DEGISIKLIGI.

[2] Russia Stunned By Pashinians Armenian Genocide Comments, *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, February 6, 2025, https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33305917.html

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