

e-ISSN: 2757-5845

**SPECIAL ISSUE**

**Geopolitical Dynamics and Historical Narratives in the Caucasus**

REVIEW OF  
**ARMENIAN STUDIES**

A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations

*Issue*  
**50**  
**2024**

Facts and Comments

**Alev KILIÇ**

The First Arab Incursions to the Armenian Region  
and Theodoros Rshtuni's Regional Policy

**Tuğçe TECİMER**

Resettlement Policies and Regional Instability:  
Armenian Population as a Strategic Tool in the Caucasus

**Şahnaz TAĞIYEVA**

Armenian Image in Turkish Folk Narratives

**Adil ÇELİK**

Iran and the South Caucasus:  
The 44-Day Karabakh War in the Changing Geopolitical Equation

**Nazrin ALİZADA**

The Occupation Forces Evacuating  
Gazi Aynîb as Part of the Ankara Agreement

**Celal PEKDOĞAN**

**BOOK REVIEW**

A Verse Dictionary in Turkish Armenian:  
A Short Dictionary Booklet

**Selenay Erva YALÇIN**



TERAZİ  
YAYINCILIK

# REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES

A Biannual Journal of History, Politics, and International Relations  
2024, Issue 50  
*Altı Aylık, Tarih, Politika ve Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi*  
Sayı 50, 2024

e-ISSN: 2757-5845

**EDITOR / EDITÖR**  
Alev KILIÇ

**MANAGING EDITOR / SORUMLU YAZI İŞLERİ MÜDÜRÜ**  
Dr. Teoman Ertuğrul TULUN

**İMTİYAZ SAHİBİ / LICENSEE**  
AVRASYA BİR VAKFI (1993)

This publication is edited by Center for Eurasian Studies on behalf of Avrasya Bir Vakfı.  
*Bu yayın, Avrasya Bir Vakfı adına, Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi tarafından hazırlanmaktadır.*

## EDITORIAL BOARD / YAYIN KURULU

In Alphabetical Order / *Alfabetik Sıra İle*

- Prof. Dr. Seçil KARAL AKGÜN** (METU, Retired Faculty Member / ODTÜ, Emekli Öğretim Üyesi)  
**Prof. Dr. Sadi ÇAYCI** (Başkent University / Başkent Üniversitesi)  
**Prof. Dr. Kemal ÇİÇEK** (Yeni Türkiye Stratejik Research Center / Yeni Türkiye Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi)  
**Dr. Şükrü ELEKDAĞ** (Ambassador (R) / E. Büyükelçi)  
**Prof. Dr. Edward ERICSON** (Marine Corps University)  
**Prof. Dr. Justin MCCARTHY** (Louisville University / Marine Corps Üniversitesi)  
**Prof. Dr. Yüksel ÖZGEN** (President of Turkish Historical Society / Türk Tarih Kurumu Başkanı)  
**Prof. Dr. Hüseyin PAZARCI** (Ankara University, Retired Faculty Member / Ankara Üniversitesi, Emekli Öğretim Üyesi)  
**Jeremy SALT** (Bilkent University, Former Faculty Member / Bilkent Üniversitesi, E. Öğretim Üyesi)  
**Dr. Pulat TACAR** (Ambassador (R) / E. Büyükelçi)  
**Prof. Dr. Ömer TURAN** (METU, Chair of History Department / ODTÜ, Tarih Bölümü Başkanı)

## YAYIN SAHİBİ / PUBLISHER

On Behalf of Terazi Publishing, Hazel ÇAĞAN ELBİR

## YAYIN İDARE MERKEZİ / PUBLICATION OFFICE

Terazi Yayıncılık Bas. Dağ. Dan. Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.  
Abidin Daver Sokak No. 12/B Daire 2-3-4 06550 Çankaya/ANKARA  
**Tel:** 0 (312) 438 50 23 - **Fax:** 0 (312) 438 50 26  
**E-posta:** terazi yayincilik@gmail.com

## YAYIN TÜRÜ / PUBLICATION TYPE

Yaygın Süreli Yayın / Periodical

## ABONE SORUMLUSU / SUBSCRIPTION OFFICE

Hülya ÖNALP  
Terazi Yayıncılık Eğt. Org. Mat. Kırt. Ltd. Şti.  
Süleyman Nazif Sok. No.12/B Daire 4 06550 Çankaya/ANKARA  
**Tel:** 0 (312) 438 50 23-24 - **Fax:** 0 (312) 438 50 26  
**E-mail:** terazi yayincilik@gmail.com

**Annual Subscription Fee - Türkiye / Yurtiçi Yıllık Abone Ücreti:** 400 TL  
**Annual Subscription Fee - International / Yurtdışı Yıllık Abone Ücreti:** 60 USD

**TASARIM / DESIGN**  
Ruhi ALAGÖZ

**BASKI / PRINTING**  
Sonçağ Yayıncılık Matbaacılık İstanbul Cad. İstanbul Çarşısı No: 48/48-49 İskitler / ANKARA

**BASKI TARİHİ / PRINTING DATE**  
9 December 2024, Ankara

**Review of Armenian Studies** is published biannually and legally classified as a Türkiye-wide periodical publication.

**Review of Armenian Studies is a refereed journal.** Review of Armenian Studies is indexed in the EBSCO and TUBITAK-ULAKBİM databases. Articles submitted for publication are subject to peer review. The editorial/advisory board takes into consideration whether the submitted article follows the rules of scientific writing and grammar. The articles are sent to two referees known for their academic reputation in their respective areas. Upon their decision, the article will be published in the journal or rejected. The reports of the referees are kept confidential and stored in the journal's archives for five years.

**Review of Armenian Studies** yılda iki kez yayımlanır. Yaygın Süreli Yayın.

**Review of Armenian Studies hakemli bir dergidir.** Review of Armenian Studies dergisi TÜBİTAK ULAKBİM ve EBSCO tarafından taranmaktadır. Yayıma sunulan makaleler hakem denetimine tabi tutulur. Gönderilen yazılar ilk olarak yayın/danışma kurulunca bilimsel anlatım ve yazım kuralları yönünden incelenir. Daha sonra uygun bulunan yazılar, alanında bilimsel çalışmaları ile tanınmış iki ayrı hakeme gönderilir. Hakemlerin kararları doğrultusunda yazı yayımlanır ya da yayımlanmaz. Hakemlerin gizli tutulan raporları derginin arşivlerinde beş yıl süre ile tutulur.

**ASSISTANT EDITOR / YARDIMCI EDITÖR**

Selenay Erva YALÇIN

**LANGUAGE EDITOR / DİL EDITÖRÜ**

Ahmet Can ÖKTEM

**ADVISORY BOARD / DANIŞMA KURULU**

In Alphabetical Order / *Alfabetik Sıra İle*

<b>Prof. Dr. Sevgi Gül AKYILMAZ</b>	(Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University / Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniversitesi)
<b>Prof. Dr. Ali ASKER</b>	(Karabük University / Karabük Üniversitesi)
<b>Prof. Dr. Tolga BAŞAK</b>	(Atatürk University / Atatürk Üniversitesi)
<b>Doç. Dr. Ramazan Erhan GÜLLÜ</b>	(İstanbul University / İstanbul Üniversitesi)
<b>Prof. Dr. Birsen KARACA</b>	(Ankara University / Ankara Üniversitesi)
<b>Prof. Dr. Barış ÖZDAL</b>	(Uludağ University / Uludağ Üniversitesi)
<b>Prof. Dr. Mehmet SARAY</b>	(İstanbul University, Retired / İstanbul Üniversitesi, Emekli)
<b>Prof. Dr. Hakan YAVUZ</b>	(University of Utah / Utah Üniversitesi)
<b>Doç. Dr. Mevlüt YÜKSEL</b>	(Atatürk University / Atatürk Üniversitesi)

**Please send your payment to the following bank account:**

For TRY - Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/6296007  
Postal Check Account Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221

For USD - Garanti Bankası- Çankaya/ANKARA Branch 181/9086957  
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

Unless otherwise stated, statements of facts or opinions appearing in  
Review of Armenian Studies are solely those of the authors and do not imply  
endorsement by the editor, managing editor, or publisher.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or introduced into a retrieval system,  
or transmitted in any form, or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying,  
recording, or otherwise, without prior written authorization of the  
Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM).

**Aşağıdaki banka/posta çeki hesap numaralarına ödeme yapabilirsiniz:**

Terazi Yayıncılık, Garanti Bankası-Çankaya/ANKARA Şubesi 181/6296007  
Posta Çeki Hesabı: Ankara/Çankaya/Merkez 5859221

Dolar Hesabı - Garanti Bankası- Çankaya/ANKARA Şubesi 181/9086957  
IBAN: TR60 0006 2000 1810 009 0869 57

Aksi belirtilmediği sürece Review of Armenian Studies'de yayımlanan yazılarda  
belirtilen olay ve fikirler sadece yazarına aittir. Editörünü, sorumlu yazı işleri  
müdürünü veya yayın sahibini bağlamaz.

Tüm hakları saklıdır. Avrasya İncelemeleri Merkezi'den (AVİM) önceden yazılı izin  
alınmaksızın hiçbir iletişim, kopyalama sistemi kullanılarak yeniden baskısı yapılamaz.  
Akademik ve haber amaçlı kısa alıntılar bu kuralın dışındadır.

## CONTENTS

(İÇİNDEKİLER)

	Page
<b>Contributors</b> .....	6
(Yazarlar)	
<b>Editorial Note</b> .....	9
(Editörün Notu)	
<b>ARTICLES</b> .....	15
(MAKALELER)	
Facts and Comments .....	15
(Olaylar ve Yorumlar)	
Editorial / Başyazı	
<b>Alev KILIÇ</b>	
<b>SPECIAL SECTIONS:</b>	
<b>HISTORICAL CONTEXTS AND CULTURAL REFLECTIONS</b>	
The First Arab Incursions to the Armenian Region and Theodoros Rshtuni's Regional Policy .....	77
(Ermenilerin Yaşadıkları Bölgeye İlk Arap Akınları ve Teodoros Rştuni'nin Bölge Politikası)	
Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi	
<b>Tuğçe TECİMER</b>	
Resettlement Policies and Regional Instability: Armenian Population as a Strategic Tool in the Caucasus .....	89
(İskân Politikaları ve Bölgesel İstikrar: Kafkasya'da Stratejik Bir Araç Olarak Ermeni Nüfusu)	
Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi	
<b>Şahnaz TAĞIYEVA</b>	
Armenian Image in Turkish Folk Narratives .....	123
(Türk Halk Anlatılarında Ermeni İmajı)	
Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi	
<b>Adil ÇELİK</b>	
<b>SPECIAL SECTIONS:</b>	
<b>REGIONAL INFLUENCE AND MEMORY</b>	
Iran and the South Caucasus: The 44-Day Karabakh War in the Changing Geopolitical Equation .....	141
(İran ve Güney Kafkasya: Değişen Jeopolitik Denklemden 44 Günlük Karabağ Savaşı)	
Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi	
<b>Nazrin ALİZADA</b>	

The Occupation Forces Evacuating Gazi Ayntâb as Part of the Ankara Agreement.....	163
--	-----

(Ankara İ'tilâfnâmesi Bağlamında İşgal Güçlerinin  
Gazi Ayntâb'ı Tahliye Etmesi)

Research Article / Araştırma Makalesi

**Celal PEKDOĞAN**

<b>BOOK REVIEW</b> .....	193
(KİTAP TAHLİLİ)	

A Verse Dictionary in Turkish Armenian: A Short Dictionary Booklet.....	193
---	-----

(Türkçe Ermenice Bir Manzum Sözlük: Kısa Bir Sözlük Kitapçığı)

**Selenay Erva YALÇIN**

## Contributors

**Ambassador (R) Alev KILIÇ** graduated from the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University in 1968. The next year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Türkiye. Kılıç served as Ambassador to F.R. of Yugoslavia between 1996 and 1998 and Ambassador/Permanent Representative to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg between 1998 and 2001. In 2001-2004, he served as the Deputy Undersecretary for Economic Affairs of the Ministry. He served as Ambassador to Switzerland (2004-2009) and Ambassador to Mexican United States (2009-2011). He retired from the Ministry in 2011. Ambassador (R) Kılıç has been the Director of Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since 2013.



**Tuğçe TECİMER** graduated from İnönü University, Department of History in 2016. In 2019, she received her master's degree from the same university. Tecimer is continuing her doctoral studies at Istanbul University, Department of General Turkish History and completed her second undergraduate education in 2024 at Ankara University, Department of Armenian Language and Culture. She is the Managing Editor of the "Ermeni Araştırmaları" Journal and has been working as an analyst at the Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM) since 2024.



**Dr. Nazrin ALIZADA** was born in Azerbaijan in 1992. She graduated from Baku State University, Department of International Relations in 2013. Then Alizada gained the title of expert in the field of International Relations from the Department of International Relations and Diplomacy at the University of Economics of Azerbaijan. After that Alizada, commenced her doctoral education at the Department of International Relations at Gazi University in 2016 and presented thesis with the title of *"The identity policy of Iran in the nation-state building process: Applied case of South Azerbaijan"* in 2021. From 2017 to 2021 she worked as a political analyst at Ankara based think tank of ANKASAM. From 2022 till now she has been working as an academican at the Hatay Mustafa Kemal University. The main major of Alizada is regional politics, Iran and the South Caucasus. She speaks fluent in English, Turkish, Russian and at the intermediate level of Persian.



**Assoc. Prof. Dr. Adil ÇELİK** was born in Afyonkarahisar in 1986, graduated from Afyon Milli Piyango Anatolian High School in 2004 and Dumlupınar University Department of Turkish Language and Literature in 2010. In 2012, he completed his master's thesis titled "Mythic Elements in the Archaic Epics of Kyrgyz Turks" at Dumlupınar University Institute of Social Sciences; In 2019, he completed his doctoral thesis titled "Stereotypes in Turkish Narrative Tradition" at Gazi University Institute of Social Sciences. Between 2019 and 2024, he taught courses on Turkish folklore, mythology and intangible cultural heritage at University of Prishtina, Yermouk University, University of D'Alger 2, University of Pomorski w Słupsku. In 2022, Çelik received the title of Associate Professor. Since 2012, he has been working at Cumhuriyet University, Department of Turkish Folklore. Çelik, who has been working as the Head of the Department of Social Practices and Deputy Head of the Department since 2018 in the same department, has books titled "Levirat in Turkish Folklore" and "Mythology in Kyrgyz Archaic Epics" and scientific studies published in various fields of folklore, especially on topics such as mythology, oral narratives, identity, social practices.



**Şahnaz TAĞIYEVA** completed her bachelor's degree in Journalism at the Western University in 2013. She later earned a master's degree in Social Work from Azerbaijan State Pedagogical University in 2021, graduating with honors. Since 2017, she has been affiliated with the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, initially working as a junior researcher in the North Caucasus Department. Currently, she holds the position of researcher in the Department of Georgian Studies.



**Assist. Prof. Dr. Celal PEKDOĞAN** was born in Malatya, where he completed his primary, secondary and high school education. He finished his higher education at Istanbul University, Faculty of Letters, Department of History. He received his master's and doctorate at Hacettepe University. After working at Fırat University, he was appointed to Gaziantep University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of History. Pekdoğan continues to work at Gaziantep University. In addition to his numerous scientific articles, he published his books titled "Gaziantep Ticaret Odasının 100 Yılı (1898-1998)", "Gaziantep 1999"; "Gazi'den Gazi'ye Mustafa Kemal ile Muhâberât", Ankara 2014; "Şehr-i Ayntâb-ı Cihân/Gaziantep (1867-1929)", "Ayntâb'da Yaşamak", Ankara 2015; "Parola: Ayntâb, Özdemiş Bey'in Hâtrâtı, Etrâf-ı Şehir Cebheler Kumandanlığı Tahrîrât ve Telgraf ve Telefon ve Ta'mim Defteri", Ankara 2015.





**Selenay Erva YALÇIN** graduated from Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University Faculty of Law in 2024. She completed the traineeship program of the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) at the end of 2023. In January 2024, she started working as a Scholar in Residence at AVİM. She carries out research in genocide law and the legal evaluation of Turkish-Armenian relations.



## EDITORIAL NOTE

---

**A**s we proudly present the 50<sup>th</sup> issue of the Review of Armenian Studies (RAS), it is with profound respect that we commemorate the enduring legacy of our founder, Ambassador (R.) Dr. Ömer Engin Lütem, who passed away on January 6, 2018. His vision continues to guide us, fostering a deeper understanding of Armenian-related issues across various disciplines such as history, political science, economics, sociology, and law. This issue not only honors his memory but also marks a significant milestone in our journey as a pivotal source of scholarly discourse.

The Institute for Armenian Research, originally publisher of the bilingual quarterly *Ermeni Araştırmaları Dergisi*, recognized the need for a dedicated English publication given the increasing number of articles in English on the issues. Thus, RAS was conceived not as a mere translation of its Turkish counterpart but as a distinct venue aiming to reach international audience and provide scholarly insights into the complexities of Armenian and Caucasus development. This differentiation allows RAS to address specific themes and engage with a global readership on the nuances of Turkish-Armenian relations and issues of the Caucasus.

As we reflect on our past and look forward to the future, the Review of Armenian Studies remains dedicated to its mission of providing a comprehensive and scholarly examination of the Armenian and Caucasus issues. Each article and research endeavor in this journal is a testament to the rigorous academic environment that Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) envisioned and cultivated. In this special issue, we also introduce our new Managing Editor, Dr. Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun.

On behalf of the editorial team and our readership, we extend our gratitude to all contributors and researchers who have been part of this journey. We continue to strive towards excellence in research and publication, contributing to the understanding of complex historical narratives and contemporary issues in the region.

In light of the ongoing challenges presented by the global and regional political climate, this 50<sup>th</sup> issue comes at a time when the need for nuanced understanding and dialogue is more critical than ever. The political environment in the Caucasus region, notably Armenia's current dynamics under Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, reflects a landscape of fluctuating reforms and contested diplomatic relations that underscore the themes discussed in this edition.

Despite his initial reformist zeal, Paşinyan has faced considerable resistance, not only from within Armenia but more so from the Diaspora and external actors with vested interests, resulting in a series of retractions and redefinitions of policy. This tenuous balance between internal aspirations and external pressures is a reflection of Armenia's broader struggle to navigate its geopolitical stance between traditional alliances and new partnerships. The Constitutional Court's recent rulings further complicate Armenia's foreign policy, presenting conflicting interpretations that influence the nation's diplomatic posture toward neighbors like Azerbaijan and Türkiye.

Moreover, Armenia's attempts to maintain a dual alignment with both Russia and Western nations illustrate the complexities of regional politics where economic dependencies and security alignments often collide. This delicate balancing act is further strained by Armenia's involvement in regional platforms and initiatives, which, while aimed at fostering cooperation, also reveal the deep-seated challenges of regional integration and peacebuilding.

As RAS continues to explore these intricate issues, we strive to provide our readers with comprehensive analyses that not only delve into the historical roots but also offer perspectives on contemporary developments. The articles in this issue, ranging from detailed examinations of Armenia's constitutional debates to analyses of its foreign policy maneuvers, aim to contribute to a better understanding of the Caucasus region's ongoing transformation and its impact on global affairs. We believe that the scholarly work featured in RAS is crucial for informing policy discussions and enhancing public discourse around these pivotal issues.

As we navigate these complex narratives, we thank our contributors for their relentless pursuit of truth and clarity. Their dedication ensures that RAS remains at the forefront of scholarly research, providing our readers with reliable, insightful analyses that resonate well beyond the academic community.

The special issues title will be **“Geopolitical Dynamics and Historical Narratives in the Caucasus”**.

The first section, **“Historical Contexts and Cultural Reflections,”** offers a compilation of articles that explore the historical narratives that have shaped the cultural and political landscape of the Caucasus, reflecting on how history is remembered and its impact on contemporary identity and politics. The second section, **“Regional Influence and Memory,”** examines the collective memory of significant events, the lingering impacts of past conflicts, and the strategies for peace and reconciliation that have emerged over time, assessing the interconnectivity of regional narratives and their implications for future

relations and policy formulations. As we present these thematic sections, we continue the legacy of the Review of Armenian Studies, committed to providing a platform for critical inquiry and scholarly debate, guided by the scholarly pursuit of understanding complex realities through multiple lenses. We invite our readers to engage with these diverse perspectives to gain a richer understanding of the Caucasus region's past, present, and potential futures, honoring the vision of our founder and the ongoing contributions of our scholarly community.

Building on this thematic foundation, we delve deeper into the current geopolitical context with an authoritative perspective. In this context, our issue begins with an insightful piece by Chief Editor Ambassador (R.) Alev Kılıç in **"Facts and Comments"** offering a current analysis of the geopolitical landscape, particularly focusing on Armenia's internal and foreign affairs from July-November 2024. The analysis delves into the challenges faced by Nikol Pashinyan's administration, which contends with both domestic opposition and the intricacies of navigating international alliances and opposition. This sets a robust foundation for the discussions that follow in this issue.

**Historical Contexts and Cultural Reflections section**, begins with Tuğçe Tecimer's **"The First Arab Incursions to the Armenian Region and Theodoros Rshtuni's Regional Policy"** This article delves into the early Arab invasions and the critical role of Theodoros Rshtuni in the 7th century. Tecimer examines Rshtuni's strategic responses to these incursions, highlighting his influence on Armenian military and political strategies during a period of significant geopolitical upheaval.

The section continues with Şahnaz Tağıyeva's **"Resettlement Policies and Regional Instability: Armenian Population as a Strategic Tool in the Caucasus"** explores the demographic and cultural dynamics of the Caucasus. Tağıyeva details the historical background of Armenian settlements and discusses the impact of various civilizations that have left their mark on the region. The article emphasizes the complex interplay of ethnic compositions and the geopolitical interests that have historically driven conflict and cooperation within the Caucasus.

It features another analysis by Adil Çelik's **"Armenian Image in Turkish Folk Narratives"** This study provides a detailed examination of how Armenians are depicted in Turkish legends, epics, folk tales, and jokes, exploring the relationship between folklore and the stereotyping of Armenians. Çelik meticulously analyzes how these narratives contribute to the construction of social identities by embedding the concept of the "other." The article discusses how these folklore elements not only reflect but also shape the perceptions of Armenians within Turkish society, illustrating the dual nature of the Armenian

image as both a reminder of expected social behaviors and a representation of shared cultural values.

**Regional Influence and Memory Section** features Nazrin Alizada’s “**Iran and the South Caucasus: The 44-Day Karabakh War in the Changing Geopolitical Equation**” Alizada analyzes Iran’s strategic positioning and its responses to the recent Karabakh war. The article assesses how Iran’s historical and current geopolitical strategies are influenced by the broader regional dynamics and how these strategies affect its relations with neighboring countries, particularly Azerbaijan and Armenia.

This section features another article by Celal Pakdoğan’s “**The Occupation Forces Evacuating Gazi Ayntâb as Part of the Ankara Agreement**” adds a critical historical perspective. This article revisits the significant events surrounding the British and French occupation of Gazi Ayntâb following World War I and the eventual evacuation under the Ankara Agreement. Pakdoğan provides a detailed analysis of the geopolitical and social ramifications of the occupation, the role of local resistance movements led by Mustafa Kemal, and the strategic negotiations that culminated in the Ankara Agreement. The piece highlights how these events not only reshaped the regional power dynamics but also had lasting impacts on the local population’s identity and historical memory, reflecting the broader themes of conflict, resistance, and reconciliation that are central to understanding the Caucasus region’s complex history.

This special edition concludes with an engaging book review by Selenay Erva Yalçın on “**A Verse Dictionary in Turkish Armenian: A Short Dictionary Booklet**” This review delves into Boğos Torosyan of Divrigi’s pioneering work, which serves as a crucial resource in the study of Turkish-Armenian linguistic interactions. Published in June 2024, the booklet, titled “*Türkçe Ermenice Bir Manzum Sözlük: Kısa Bir Sözlük Kitapçığı*” (A Verse Dictionary In Turkish Armenian: A Short Dictionary Booklet), offers an innovative analysis of the integration of Turkish and Armenian languages through verse.

Yalçın highlights how the booklet’s structure, comprising an introduction, textual analysis, index, and appendices, facilitates a comprehensive understanding of this niche field. The linguistic analysis presented in the dictionary not only enriches our knowledge of Turkology and Armenology but also contributes to broader disciplines such as historical linguistics, lexicology, and etymology. This review emphasizes the dictionary’s role in providing insights into the cultural and linguistic synthesis that characterizes the shared history and interactions between Turkish and Armenian communities.

This special issue, entitled “Geopolitical Dynamics and Historical Narratives in the Caucasus,” is structured to facilitate a deeper exploration of the interplay between history and modern geopolitics, reflecting the comprehensive scope of research that the Review of Armenian Studies has committed to since its inception.

In commemorating this 50<sup>th</sup> publication milestone, we not only celebrate our past achievements but also renew our commitment to advancing research that contributes meaningfully to the understanding and resolution of the challenges facing the Armenia and broader Caucasus regions today.

We hope you enjoy the journal and extend our best wishes for the coming year.



## EDITORIAL / BAŞYAZI

**To cite this article:** Kılıç, Alev. “Facts and Comments”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 50 (2024): 15-76.

**Received:** 27.11.2024

**Accepted:** 29.11.2024

# FACTS AND COMMENTS

(OLAYLAR VE YORUMLAR)

Alev KILIÇ\*

**Abstract:** *This article covers the period of July-November 2024 of the internal developments in Armenia, the foreign dynamics shaping the international relations of Armenia, the ongoing process of signing the peace agreement with Azerbaijan, and the bilateral relations of Türkiye and Armenia in the light of the process of normalisation of their relations.*

*As Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had to retract from or redefine some of his reformist proposals in face of an extremist and disruptive opposition inside the country, numerically limited but encouraged and abetted by the radical-militant groups in the Diaspora, as well as by the foreign parties siding with the previous administrations and the Church. His vacillating rhetoric on the need for change of the Constitution is one such case in point. The Constitutional Court, in a very expansive decision, confirming that the Declaration of Independence, an inseparable part of the Constitution, is not binding with regard to issues pertaining to Azerbaijan, yet valid for Türkiye. Harboring two such conflicting assessments has provided Pashinyan with the ground to change his discourse again. In the process of drafting the peace agreement, Armenia has adamantly insisted, with the backing of foreign, particularly Western countries and circles, on signing a partial agreement which did not take into consideration legitimate concerns or interests of Azerbaijan, thus not befitting the spirit of a lasting peace. The practice of running with the hare and hunting with the hound has*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5180-2896>  
Ambassador (R), Director of the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)  
Email: [akilic@avim.org.tr](mailto:akilic@avim.org.tr)



*continued as Armenia, while extending a hand to Azerbaijan for peace and reconciliation, on the other hand, with the connivance of Western partners, did not shy away from keeping the Karabagh issue alive in international agenda and waged a campaign of accusing Azerbaijan for preparing a military assault. The latest blow to bettering relations was the last minute refusal to be represented in the COP29 conference.*

*In foreign relations, Armenia's efforts to manage both Russia and the West, a policy of riding two horses or sitting on two chairs at the same time, has become all the more difficult to sustain. While openly siding with the West on security issues, deep rooted economic reliance on Russia has not changed. As a result of Western tolerance to Armenia in breaking the sanctions imposed on Russia, with collaboration of Iran, a significant leap, albeit temporary, in the GDP has been recorded. Armenia has not opted to stay away from the 3+3 Platform, a regional gathering that promotes the vision that regional issues can best be solved by the cooperation of the countries of the region, in spite of sharing a common understanding with the West that Russian influence in the region should be diminished. Nevertheless, Armenia has rejected the proposal to work out the peace agreement with Azerbaijan within that platform.*

*The process of normalization of relations between Türkiye and Armenia has kept its positive course. The increase in high level contacts and bilateral communications have demonstrated the mutually softening atmosphere. The developments in Iran and Georgia have made it imperative for Armenia to have the Turkish border open. A railway connection has also acquired priority in addition to the land crossing. Applying all means to press Türkiye to open the border in a dire situation, Armenia nevertheless has continued to totally ignore the need to take counter steps on issues of sensitivity and concern for Türkiye, well known by Armenia, under the guise of "no preconditions". Furthermore, Armenia's initiatives to side with countries entrenched in their anti-Türkiye positions or those with conjectural differences have also continued unabated.*

**Keywords:** Pashinian, Mirzoyan, Rubinian, Diaspora, Galstanian, Putin, Lavrov, Zaharova, Biden, Blinken, Erdoğan, Fidan

**Öz:** Bu incelemede Temmuz-Kasım 2024 tarihleri döneminde Ermenistan'daki iç gelişmeler, dış ilişkiler, Azerbaycan ile barış sürecindeki gelişmeler ile Türkiye-Ermenistan arasındaki ilişkiler ve normalleşme süreci ele alınmaktadır.

*Nikol Paşinyan yönetimi iç politikada; Diasporanın radikal-militan kanadının, eski yönetimden yana dış güçlerin ve Kilisenin desteğine sahip aşırı ve yıkıcı bir muhalefetin karşısında geri adımlar atmak, bazı ifadelerini tevil etmek*

*durumunda kalmıştır. Paşinyan'ın anayasa değişikliği konusundaki yaklaşımı bu bakımdan önemli bir gösterge olmuştur. Söylem değişikliğine gerekçe olan, Anayasa Mahkemesinin ayrıntılı kararında, Anayasa'nın ayrılmaz bir parçası olan Bağımsızlık Bildirgesi'nin bir yandan Azerbaycan bakımından bağlayıcı olmadığı ileri sürülürken, diğer taraftan Türkiye bakımından geçerli olduğu çelişmesine yer verilmiştir. Azerbaycan ile barış antlaşması sürecinde, Ermenistan, Azerbaycan'ın meşru endişelerini gidermeden, Azerbaycan'ın çıkarlarına ve kalıcı bir barışın ruhuna uymayan, sınırlı bir anlaşma imzalanması direktmesini özellikle Batılı ülkeler ve çevrelerden sağlamayı başardığı dış desteklerle sürdürmüştür. Bir yandan Azerbaycan'a barış ve uzlaşma elinin uzatılması diğer yandan, özellikle Batılı yandaşlar aracılığıyla, Karabağ konusunun gündemde tutulması, böylece Azerbaycan'ın saldırgan emellerle suçlanması, "tavşana kaç, taziya tut" politikasının devam ettiğini göstermiştir. İlişkilerin düzelmesine vurulan son darbe Baku'da yapılan COP29 uluslararası konferansına son anda verilen katılmama kararı olmuştur.*

*Dış ilişkilerde hem Rusya'yı, hem Batı'yı idare etme çabası, bu suretle aynı anda iki ata binme veya iki ayrı sandalyede oturma politikası zaman içinde giderek güçleşerek devam etmiştir. Ermenistan güvenlik alanında açık biçimde Batı'ya yanaşılırken, Rusya ile köklü ekonomik bağlarda değişiklik olmamıştır. Rusya'ya uygulanan yaptırımların, Ermenistan tarafından, İran ile iş birliği içinde, ihlaline göz yumulması sonucu geçici de olsa gayrisafi milli gelirde önemli bir sıçrama kaydedilmiştir. Bölgede Rusya'nın etkisini azaltma konusunda Batı'yla anlayış birliği içinde olmakla beraber, bölgenin sorunlarının ancak bölge ülkelerinin iş birliği ile çözülebileceğini öngören 3+3 Platformu'nun dışında da kalınmamıştır. Ermenistan, Azerbaycan ile anlaşma sürecinin bu platformda sonuçlandırılması önerisini ise reddetmiştir.*

*Türkiye ile ilişkilerde başlayan normalleşme süreci olumlu seyrini sürdürmüş, dönem içinde üst düzey temaslarda ve karşılıklı iletişimdeki artış karşılıklı yumuşamanın göstergesi olmuştur. Gürcistan'daki ve İran'daki gelişmeler Ermenistan bakımından Türkiye sınırının açılmasını acil zorunluluk haline getirmiş, kara ulaşımının yanı sıra demir yolu bağlantısı da öncelik kazanmıştır. Batı'nın da desteğiyle Türkiye üzerinde baskı oluşturma çabalarından geri durmayan Ermenistan, Türkiye'nin duyarlılığını bildiği konularda ise, ön koşul kavramına sığınarak, yapıcı bir adım atmaktan bu dönem içinde de kaçınmıştır. Aynı şekilde, Türkiye karşıtlığı bilinen veya Türkiye ile ilişkileri gerginleşen ülkelere yanaşma ve karşı denge kurma girişimleri de devamlılık göstermiştir. İlaven, Ermenistan'ın Türkiye'ye karşı kemikleşmiş tutumu olan veya Türkiye ile konjektürel anlaşmazlıkları olan ülkeler ile olan beraber hareket etme girişimleri aralıksız devam etmiştir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Paşinyan, Mirzoyan, Rubinyan, Diaspora, Galstanyan, Putin, Lavrov, Zaharova, Biden, Blinken, Erdoğan, Fidan

## 1. Domestic Developments in Armenia

Archbishop Bagrat Galstanyan, who assumed the leadership of the opposition against the Pashinyan government and who announced his candidacy for the prime minister's post on 26 May, organised a rally before the Republic Day on 28 May in order to draw attention to himself with provocative actions. He spent the night at the ceremony site with the intent of disrupting the anticipated ceremony. The administration monitored the situation and visited the memorial not in the morning, as was customary, but in the afternoon, when the demonstrators had dispersed. However, another unexpected event took place at the memorial site. Karekin II, the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin, who arrived separately from the administration, was kept waiting at the entrance by the security forces within the framework of security measures.<sup>1</sup> "Stopping" the Catholicos from visiting the memorial site was heavily criticised by the opposition. This situation has been seen as a new indicator of the adversity between the Administration and the Church.

The militant and fanatical organizations of the Diaspora did not lose time in using this incident to express their opposition to the Pashinyan administration. For instance, the President of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), in a statement released on 3 June, described the lack of respect by state officials to the supreme representative of their national church as an act against all Armenians of faith and called on Armenians to reaffirm their loyalty to the Church. In a statement released on 4 June, the Dashnaktsutyun (Armenian Revolutionary Federation- ARF) Western US Central Committee argued that the Pashinyan administration has been pursuing a course that has been destroying the motherland and the nation for the last four years, and systematically insulting the fundamental values of the entire nation. The Federation also expressed its unconditional full support for Archbishop Galstanyan and the movement he has initiated.

At a regional convention of the Federation held on 2 July in California, USA, the Armenian government in office was accused and condemned for failing to protect the Armenian nation, surrendering Karabakh and hundreds of square kilometres of sovereign Armenian territory to the enemy, leaving the citizens of Armenia and the Armenians of Karabakh defenceless. Moreover, it declared its unwavering support for efforts to establish a national and pro-Armenian government in Armenia.<sup>2</sup>

---

1 "Police Attempt to Stop Catholicos Karekin II from Visiting Sardarabad Monument", *Asbarez*, May 28, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/police-attempt-to-stop-catholicos-karekin-ii-from-visiting-sardarabad-monument/>.

2 "ARF Western U.S.A. 58th Regional Convention Statement", *Asbarez*, July 2, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/arf-western-u-s-a-58th-regional-convention-statement/>.

Speaking at the street protests on 8 June, Archbishop Galstanyan announced that they would not leave the streets in the coming months, that the street movement would continue, and called on the OSCE Minsk Group to mediate in peace negotiations with Azerbaijan. On 9 June, he published a video in Russian, probably with a view to gaining the support of Russia and those in favour of Russia.

At a meeting with members of his party on 22 June, Prime Minister Pashinyan criticised the opposition movement, claiming that it fails to connect with the spirit and true sentiments of the Armenian populace and falls short in resonating with the essence of Armenia as perceived by its people. Galstanyan responded on 23 June that he was leading a national liberation struggle, and that the government was aiming to destabilise Armenia, while he was defending the interests and sovereignty of the Armenian people.<sup>3</sup>

There is no doubt that the escalating antagonism between the government and the Armenian Apostolic Church, represented by Catholicos Karekin II, and the government's refusal to attend religious services and the Church's refusal to attend official ceremonies have caused discomfort on both sides, while the opposition and the militant-radical Diaspora organizations were rubbing their hands. The first step to resolve this situation came from the Catholicos, who invited Pashinyan and the government officials to the reconsecration ceremony of the Etchmiadzin Cathedral on 29 September. As expected, Pashinyan accepted the invitation and attended the ceremony with government officials. The leading figures of the opposition, the two former Presidents R. Kocharyan and S. Sargsyan, despite their usual attentiveness to relations with the Church, did not attend the ceremony in protest against this development. In his speech, the Catholicos emphasised the importance of religion and the Church for national unity and the need to respect the Church, but did not target Pashinyan personally or by name.<sup>4</sup> Thus, an important step was taken in improving the relations between religion and state.

The participation in the rally in Yerevan on 2 October, which was announced with great expectations by Archbishop Galstanyan, the leader of the opposition, was only around 1500. Recalling that the first rally in May was attended by 30-40 thousand people, this was undoubtedly a great disappointment. When the same situation occurred at Galstanyan's rally in front of the Presidential Palace in Yerevan on 25 October, he declared that his campaign for a new

3 Hoory Minoyan, "Armenian Prime Minister Criticizes Opposition as National Debates Intensify", *The Armenian Weekly*, June 25, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/06/25/armenian-prime-ministercriticizes-opposition-as-national-debates-intensify/>.

4 Shoghik Galstian, "Garegin Warns Armenian Church's Detractors In Mass Attended By Pashinian", *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, September 30, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/garegin-warns-armenian-churchs-detractors-in-mass-attended-by-pashinian/33140850.html>.

regime would continue, but did not give a date for future rallies. It is possible to speculate that the rapprochement between the government and the Church played a role in this development.

In his speech on 5 July at the celebration of the 29th anniversary of the adoption of their current constitution, which was adopted by referendum in 1995, Pashinyan stated that the current Constitution does not reflect their idea of “the rules of co-existence with their neighbors their community and other residents of their state” and therefore a new constitution, to be determined by the people, is needed.<sup>5</sup> In fact, Pashinyan has recently announced that he has appointed a special commission to draft a new constitutional text. President Vahagn Khachaturyan also emphasised in his statement that the Constitution is not an unchangeable, one-time text; it is a flexible and comprehensive instrument.

The issue of constitutional amendments, in particular the contents of the Declaration of Independence, which is an integral part of the Constitution and was included in the preamble of the Constitution as a result of the referendum held in 1995, continued to be a controversial subject during the period and emerged as an important obstacle in relations with Azerbaijan and the signing of the peace treaty.

On 23 August, in his speech on the 34<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence of Armenia, Pashinyan changed his narrative, arguing that not all the contents of the Declaration of Independence were included in the Constitution, that the two texts were not identical, and that the Constitution took into account only those parts of the Declaration of Independence adopted by the Supreme Council of Soviet Armenia on 23 August 1990, which are applicable in the present conditions.<sup>6</sup> In his message, President Khachaturyan stated that the Declaration of Independence marked the beginning of a new cycle which started with the independence referendum held on 21 September 1991, but it was essentially a symbolic pillar.<sup>7</sup>

Pashinyan's change of narrative to the effect that the Declaration of Independence, which is an integral part of the Constitution, is not binding was justified by a judgement of the Constitutional Court at the end of August which

5 Shoghik Galstian, “Pashinian Again Calls For New Armenian Constitution”, *Azattyun Radiokayan*, July 5, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/33023447.html>.

6 “Անկախության հռչակագրի և ՀՀ Սահմանադրության բովանդակությունները նույնական չեն Փաշինյան”, *Azattyun Radiokayan*, August 23, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/ankakhoutyan-hrchakagri-ev-hh-sahmanadrutyan-bovandakutyunnerynuynakan-chen-pashinyan/33089529.html>.

7 “The Congratulatory Message of President Vahagn Khachaturyan on The Adoption of The Declaration of Independence of Armenia”, *The President of the Republic of Armenia*, August 23, 2024, <https://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2024/08/23/President-VahagnKhachaturyan/>.

reached this conclusion.<sup>8</sup> In summary, the Constitutional Court, pointing out that it had approved the agreement between Armenia and Azerbaijan determining the principles of border delimitation, stated that this provision of the Declaration of Independence, which envisaged the unification of Karabakh with Armenia, was therefore invalid and that there was no provision to this effect in the articles of the Constitution.

This decision of the Constitutional Court, on the one hand, makes a politically motivated judgement on the demand for the amendment of the Constitution, which is an obstacle to the peace agreement, in order to satisfy Azerbaijan, by arguing that some statements of the Declaration of Independence do not have absolute binding force. On the other hand, it contains the contradiction of stating in a part of the same decision that similar expressions in the Declaration of Independence towards Türkiye, which led to the rejection of the Zurich Protocols in 2009, are valid in terms of the timely decision regarding Türkiye, thus creates doubts about its credibility. As a matter of fact, Armenia's opposition parties strongly opposed the decision, arguing that the Declaration of Independence is a legal document that is not open to debate and that the Constitutional Court has made a decision that exceeds its authority.

On the other hand, the Minister of Justice, who is also the head of the Constitutional Reforms Council of Armenia, made a statement on 30 August and announced that amendments to the Constitution will be put to referendum in 2027, in line with the date envisaged by Prime Minister Pashinyan.<sup>9</sup> Due to internal party conflicts, the Minister of Justice resigned on 1 October.<sup>10</sup> On 5 November 2024, Srбуhi Galyan was appointed as Minister of Justice.

Upon the request of Prime Minister Pashinyan, on 18 November, Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure as well as Minister of Internal Affairs have tendered their resignation. Several high level judiciary and government officials also followed suit.

Another issue discussed during the period was changing the history book title “History of Armenians” to “History of Armenia” in the school curriculum. The

8 “2023 Թվականի Դեկտեմբերի 25-ին Սանկտ Պետերբուրգում, Ստորագրված «Եվրասիական Տնտեսական Միության Եվ Դրա Անդամ Պետությունների Մի Կողմից, Եվ Իրանի Իսլամական Հանրապետության Մյուս Կողմից, Միջեկ Ազատ Առեկտրի Մասին Համաձայնագրում Ամրագրված Պարտավորությունների՝ Սահմանադրությանը Համապատասխանության Հարցը Որոշելու Վերաբերյալ Գործով», Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Սահմանադրական Դատարան, 27

Eylül 2024, [https://www.concourt.am/decision/decisions/66f6b93924413\\_sdv-1750.pdf](https://www.concourt.am/decision/decisions/66f6b93924413_sdv-1750.pdf).

9 “Constitutional Reforms Referendum Planned for 2027”, *ArmenPress*, August 29, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1198566>.

10 Gayane Saribekian, “Armenian Justice Minister Resigns Under Ruling Party Pressure”, *Azattyun Radiokayan*, October 1, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/33142106.html>.



opposition strongly opposed this change, claiming that the thousands of years of history of Armenians was being disregarded and the Diaspora, which constitutes the majority of the Armenian population, was being excluded from the scope. Pashinyan, on the other hand, insisted on his view and emphasised that “History of Armenians” does not include or clearly represent the idea of statehood, whereas the “History of Armenia” is a state-based approach that includes the periods of non-existence of the state within this scope.<sup>11</sup>

Relations with Azerbaijan and the content of the peace treaty continued to be the main issues that the opposition focused on and criticised the administration in domestic politics. The opposition increased its criticism especially regarding the territorial integrity of Armenia, claiming that two hundred square kilometres of land is under Azerbaijani occupation. In his statement on 31 August, Pashinyan emphasised that the Republic of Armenia has an area of 29,743 square kilometres, and not a single millimetre of this territory would be up for discussion.<sup>12</sup>

On 2 September, the High Commissioner for Diaspora Affairs Zareh Sinanyan stated that the communication with the Diaspora continues consistently and that the Diaspora commissioners in some countries in Europe will be expanded to the US, Canada and Latin American countries at the Armenian Global Summit to be held within the month. On 20 September, Prime Minister Pashinyan received Diaspora representatives from foreign countries and exchanged views with them. Pashinyan stated that his aim is to make relationship between Armenia and the Diaspora more institutional and state-oriented and that no matter how important and precious the Diaspora is, it is not an institution of governance for the Republic of Armenia.<sup>13</sup>

Speaking on 18 September at the Armenian Global Summit, organised for the second time to regulate the Diaspora-Armenia relations, Pashinyan criticised the current understanding of “patriotism”, stating that it does not benefit the motherland and that it is an imperialist model that excludes the existence of an independent and sovereign Armenian state.<sup>14</sup> As expected, this approach, which emphasises state presence and responsibility, has led to criticism among the militant radical elements of the Diaspora.

11 “Pashinyan’s Proposal Came to Life: “History of Armenia” Instead of “History of Armenians””, *Media Max*, July 11, 2024, <https://mediamax.am/en/news/education/55246/>.

12 ““Not A Single Millimeter of Armenian Territory is Up for Debate” - Pashinyan”, *JamNews*, September 16, 2024, <https://jam-news.net/not-a-single-millimeter-of-the-territory-of-armenia-is-up-for-debate-pashinyan/>.

13 “Our Goal is to Make Armenia-Diaspora Relations More Institutional and State-Oriented - PM”, *ArmenPress*, September 20, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1200375>.

14 Hoory Minoyan, “Pashinyan’s Remarks At Global Summit Question Armenian Patriotism”, *The Armenian Weekly*, September 18, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/09/18/pashinyans-remarks-at-global-summit-question-armenian-patriotism/#:~:text=YEREVAN%E2%80%94During%20the%20second%20Armenian%20Global,superficial%20concept%20lacking%20true%20sovereignty>.

On 19 September, on the anniversary of the establishment of Azerbaijan's sovereignty in Karabakh, Pashinyan did not make any statement and did not raise the issue at the cabinet meeting. On the other hand, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a statement accusing Azerbaijan, alleging military aggression and ethnic cleansing.<sup>15</sup> The opposition in Armenia and the militant and fanatical organizations of the Diaspora abroad have continued to state with increasing boldness and audacity that the problem is not over and that the demands for independence remain. On 18 October, the Ministry of Interior announced that the refugee status of Armenians from Karabakh had been extended until 31 December 2025, with the possibility of further extension.<sup>16</sup>

The government has announced that it plans to boost its defence expenditure by 20% to \$1.7 billion in 2025.<sup>17</sup>

An important problem facing Armenia is the decline in birth rates. The reasons for this are emigration, declining birth rates and increasing mortality rates. In the first seven months of 2024, it was reported that this situation continued. According to statistical data, the birth rate decreased by 7.6% and the death rate increased by 6.3%. Accordingly, the vitality index (the ratio of births to deaths) dropped to 122.9% down from 141.2% during the same period of last year.<sup>18</sup> On 17 October, the Cabinet approved the 2024-2040 Strategy for Improving the Demographic Situation. Four objectives were set in the strategy: First, to create an environment of welfare for the family. Second, to prevent premature deaths and provide the elderly with the opportunity to live longer. Third, to manage migration and create an environment that attracts foreigners to Armenia and fourth, to use Diaspora's capital.<sup>19</sup>

At a press conference on 30 July, the Governor of the Central Bank reported that individual remittances through banks amounted to \$2.52 billion in the first six months of the year, with about two-thirds originating from Russia. According to official data, remittances totalled \$2.1 billion in 2021, jumping to \$5.2 billion in 2022 and \$5.7 billion in 2023. Transfers originating from Russia accounted for about \$3.6 billion of the total in 2022. Another important

15 "Armenia Condemns Fresh 'Azerbaijani Aggression' Against Karabakh", *Azattyun Radiokayan*, September 19, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32599494.html>.

16 Arshaluys Barseghyan, "Armenia extends protection status for Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians", *OC Media*, October 18, 2024, <https://oc-media.org/armenia-extends-protection-status-for-nagorno-karabakharmenians/>.

17 "Armenia to Boost Defense Spending by 20% in 2025", *Report News Agency*, October 28, 2024, <https://report.az/en/region/armenia-to-boost-defense-spending-by-20-in-2025/>.

18 Arshaluys Mgdetsyan, Birth Rate in Armenia Drops by 7.6%, Mortality Rises by 6.3% in First Seven Months of 2024, *The California Courier*, September 6, 2024, <https://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/birthrate-in-armenia-drops-by-7-6-mortality-rises-by-6-3-in-first-seven-months-of-2024/>.

19 "Government Approves Strategy for Improving the Demographic Situation", *ArmenPress*, October 17, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202496>.



source was the US. These two countries account for 78% of total transfers. In 2024, Russia's share decreased by 20% to \$1.4 billion in the first six months. The reasons for this were the return of temporary refugees from Russia or their departure to other countries, sanctions imposed on banks, and the fact that some workers made their transfers in cash rather than through banks. The Minister of Finance told parliament on 2 September that transfers decreased by 48.3% in the first six months, mainly due to a \$569.4 million decrease in transfers from Russia.<sup>20</sup>

On 30 August, the Ministry of Economy published a foreign trade-focused economic situation report covering the first six months of the year. According to the report, exports increased 2.3 times compared to the same period in 2023, reaching \$7.9 billion. There was also a significant change in export items, with gold exports coming first with 14.7 times increase to \$4.1 billion. This was followed by \$709.6 million worth of jewellery exports with a 18.4 times increase. Diamond exports increased by 55.7% to \$397.3 million and copper exports by 517.1% to \$267.6 million. The fifth most important export item was telephones and their components, which increased by 55% to \$333 million. The Minister of Finance stated on 2 September that this increase in exports was not reflected in local goods, which decreased by 4%.

There were also significant changes in terms of export destinations. Exports to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Economic Union, the traditional destinations of exports, fell by 19.5%, to the EU by 25.1%, while exports to "other countries" increased by 5.5 times. The United Arab Emirates (UAE), is the leading destination with exports of \$3.6 billion, an increase of 7.8 times. Hong Kong with \$1.32 billion, up 17.7 times, followed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) with \$714.3 million, up 3.4 times. Exports to Russia, which had ranked first until now, decreased by 21.1% to \$1.4 billion.<sup>21</sup>

In the same period, the volume of imports also increased significantly, reaching \$10.48 billion with an increase of 86.5%. Gold ranked first in imports with an increase of 21.3 times, amounting to \$5.24 billion. This was followed by telephones and their parts worth \$419.7 million with an increase of 26.8%, and diamonds worth \$399.6 million with an increase of 26.8%. Russia ranked first in imports with seven billion dollars with a 4.7 times increase. This was

20 "Armenia Faces 48% Drop in Remittances, Heavily Reliant on Russia and US", *Caucasus Watch*, September 4, 2024, <https://caucasuswatch.de/en/news/armenia-faces-48-drop-in-remittances-heavily-relianton-russia-and-us.html>.

21 "Armenia's Trade Statistics for H1 2024: Export and Import Growth", *Arka News Agency*, September 2, 2024, [https://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia\\_s\\_trade\\_statistics\\_for\\_h1\\_2024\\_export\\_and\\_import\\_growth/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Ministry%20of,included%20gold%20\(%244.12%20billion%2C%20a](https://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia_s_trade_statistics_for_h1_2024_export_and_import_growth/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Ministry%20of,included%20gold%20(%244.12%20billion%2C%20a)

followed by the PRC with \$442.8 million with a decrease of 1%, Georgia with \$345.7 million with a decrease of 31.4% and Iran with \$273.2 million with a decrease of 7.1%. These four countries accounted for 77.4% of Armenia's total imports.

According to the data of the State Statistics Committee, the volume of trade between Türkiye and Armenia volume totalled \$131 million in the first five months of 2024. This is an increase of \$2 million compared to the same period of last year. Armenia's exports amounted to 225 thousand dollars in total. Since there is no border crossing, it is assumed that this trade is mainly carried out through Georgia.

As can be seen from the data above, Armenia has benefited from the sanctions imposed on Russia by the West (the US and the EU) and has made significant economic gains by importing goods from Russia for shipment to third countries and exporting goods shipped to Russia from third countries. As a result, Armenia's gross national income increased from \$13.9 billion in 2021 to \$27 billion in 2024. The West, known for its accusatory sensitivity towards violations of sanctions against Russia and Iran, has been indifferent towards Armenia. The reason for this is not difficult to guess. In order not to offend the Armenian government, which pursues a policy of distancing itself from Russia and getting closer to the West, and with the awareness that its economy is at the point of bankruptcy and that the West's aid cannot spin the wheel, it has been seen as a practical solution that can be tolerated.

It was announced that 946,162 tourists visited Armenia in the first half of the year. This shows a decrease of 6.1% compared to the same period of the previous year. The largest number of tourists came from Russia (42%), Georgia (13%) and Iran (8%).<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Agreement Process

After the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the two countries hosted by Kazakhstan in Almaty on 10-11 May, optimistic expectations emerged in the peace agreement process. The Armenian side gave the impression that the end was almost reached. However, the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan declared on 6 June that it was not possible to sign an agreement without the necessary amendments to the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia, which rejects the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, and that this was an indispensable precondition. In response to this, Armenia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs made a statement on 7 June, stating that the

22 "946,162 Foreign Tourists Visited Armenia in First Half of 2024", *MassisPost*, August 7, 2024, <https://massispost.com/2024/08/946162-foreign-tourists-visited-armenia-in-first-half-of-2024/>.

provisions of the Constitution and the amendments to it were internal affairs of Armenia, that the demand of the Azerbaijani side constituted a grave interference in the internal affairs of Armenia, that the international treaty was above the domestic law, that as a matter of fact, such a record would be included in the envisaged treaty, that the treaty was ready and that they wished to sign it as soon as possible. This statement was far from satisfying Azerbaijan. When the instance of how the protocols signed between Türkiye and Armenia in front of high-level observers were blocked by the Armenian Constitutional Court in 2009 is remembered to this day, this statement of the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs disregarding the legal procedures was not only unsatisfactory, but also unconvincing.

During the period, Azerbaijan claimed that Armenia had violated the border and opened fire, which the Armenian side denied each time. In order to find a solution to this issue, Armenia proposed the establishment of a mechanism for joint investigation of ceasefire violations at the border. The Head of the European Union Monitoring Mission (EUMM) deployed to the Armenian border expressed support for this proposal.<sup>23</sup> Azerbaijan, known for its negative attitude towards the presence and activities of the EUMM, did not respond to this proposal.

Invited to NATO's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Azerbaijan held a trilateral meeting with the US Secretary of State in Washington on 10 July. Before the meeting, the US Secretary of State stated that "we will take stock of where we are and see what more the United States can do to help the two sides reach an agreement". After the meeting, in a simple statement, the parties said, "The parties noted the progress Armenia and Azerbaijan have achieved towards the conclusion of a historic agreement on peace and establishment of interstate relations, and agreed to continue the work", yet did not elaborate. A spokesperson for the US State Department said after the meeting: "Secretary Blinken discussed the progress made toward a durable and dignified peace agreement and encouraged further steps to finalize a deal as soon as possible. The Secretary also emphasized the importance of peace in promoting regional connectivity, which would benefit the entire South Caucasus region."

Having the understanding that the continuation of the peace treaty process under its supervision would enable Russia to maintain its influence and dominance in the South Caucasus, Russia expressed at various levels during the period that the ceasefire agreement concluded in 2020 was the precursor and foundation of the peace treaty and emphasised the importance of Russia's

23 "Armenia Proposes Joint Investigations of Ceasefire Violations; Azerbaijan Unlikely to Accept", *The Armenian Report*, June 24, 2024, <https://www.thearmenianreport.com/post/armenia-proposes-jointinvestigations-of-ceasefire-violations-azerbaijan-unlikely-to-accept>.

mediation and supervision. During his official visit to Baku on 19 August, Russian President Vladimir Putin again called on Azerbaijan and Armenia to continue the process under Russia's mediation.<sup>24</sup> On his return from Azerbaijan, he immediately called Pashinyan and repeated this call over the phone. Pashinyan did not give a direct response, but in the statement made afterwards, he thanked Russia and stated that Armenia decided to continue the process bilaterally with Azerbaijan, without any intermediaries.

Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov, who accompanied Putin during his visit to Baku, mentioned the "Zangezur Corridor" and stated that Armenia sabotaged the establishment of this communication and reminded Article 9 of the Ceasefire Agreement.<sup>25</sup> This statement drew the reaction of Iran as well as Armenia, and Iran once again officially announced its opposition to the "corridor" concept. The Chairman of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Commission described the Zangezur Corridor as a fake corridor,<sup>26</sup> and the Iranian Ambassador in Yerevan stated that the dreams of the Zangezur Corridor will never be realised. The statement issued by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran was even harsher: "Any intervention by Türkiye, Azerbaijan or Russia regarding the corridor will be met with strong diplomatic and military resistance." In his meeting with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran in Yerevan on 11 September, the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs praised Iran's positive role in the South Caucasus and emphasized Iran's important place in his country's foreign policy.

In order to prevent the Zangezur Corridor turning from an issue between Armenia and Azerbaijan into a third-party rivalry and clash of influence, a high-ranking official of Azerbaijan announced on 7 August that the issue had been removed from the ongoing negotiations for further discussion.<sup>27</sup> However, this statement did not remove the issue from the agenda.

At a press conference held on 31 August, Prime Minister Pashinyan stated that a text of a 17 article treaty, including the preamble, had been negotiated, 13 of its articles had been agreed upon, Armenia had given Azerbaijan a text of the treaty covering the agreed points and that they were ready to sign it

24 "Moscow Is Ready To Get Involved In Azerbaijan-Armenia Peace Process, Putin Says", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, August 19, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-ilham-laiyev-armenia-azerbaijan-baku-talks/33084517.html>.

25 "'Zangezur Corridor': Details of the Negotiations Revealed", *AzeMedia*, August 29, 2024, <https://aze.media/zangezur-corridor-details-of-the-negotiations-revealed/>.

26 "'Zangezur Corridor' is a fake corridor - Ebrahim Azizi", *ArmenPress*, September 7, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199273>.

27 "'If Borders Were Restored To The 1920 Map, The Zangezur Corridor Wouldn't Be Needed.' Comment from Baku", *JamNews*, August 16, 2024, <https://jam-news.net/zangezur-removed-from-the-peace-agreement/>.

immediately.<sup>28</sup> Pashinyan also called on Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev for bilateral talks at the border. Pashinyan emphasized that Armenia is interested in establishing a connection between Nakhchivan and Azerbaijan, but within the framework of territorial integrity and sovereignty. On this occasion, he expressed Armenia's commitment to the ceasefire agreement, but complained about the inconsistent statements of "some partners" in Russia, saying that he believes this hinders regional communication efforts. "The presence of third forces and control by third forces is excluded. It is unacceptable for us," the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Armenia said in a statement on 9 September. On the same day, Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan announced that they had submitted to Azerbaijan the tenth draft text for a peace treaty.<sup>29</sup>

Pashinyan developed a new discourse in response to Azerbaijan's claims that the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia contains objectionable expressions. He stated that the actual Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan, by referring to Azerbaijan of 1918-1920, claims rights over Armenia's territory, but Armenia does not make this a problem and that the articles of the draft peace treaty resolve the issue of territorial integrity.<sup>30</sup> This new discourse was not convincing either.

The Azerbaijani President stated that a partial peace treaty could not be signed without agreement on all issues and reiterated the need to amend the Constitution of the Republic of Armenia. The Armenian side, on the other hand, especially through its supporters in third countries, raised the issue of Azerbaijan's participation in the international COP29 environmental meeting to be held in November and tried to put pressure on the signing of the treaty before or during this meeting. The Chair of the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations also expressed reservations regarding Azerbaijan's hosting of COP29, stating that Azerbaijan should recognize freedoms of speech and assembly, claiming that Azerbaijan was setting "ridiculous" conditions to avoid signing of a peace treaty, and arguing that the treaty would not be fair to Armenia. The Azerbaijani President criticized the request by more than 60 members of the House of Representatives to the US President to hold Azerbaijan responsible for the ethnic cleansing of the Armenians of "Artsakh" (Karabakh) before the COP29 summit, claiming that Secretary of State Blinken

28 Büşranur Koca-Can Efesoy, "Armenia Proposes Peace Treaty to Azerbaijan that Already Has 13 Of 17 Agreed-Upon Articles", *Anadolu Agency*, September 1, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/armeniaproposes-peace-treaty-to-azerbaijan-that-already-has-13-of-17-agreed-upon-articles/3318171>.

29 "Latest Version of Draft Peace Treaty Contains Fully Agreed Upon Articles, Says Armenian FM", *ArmenPress*, September 9, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199368>.

30 "Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijani Constitution Indeed Contains Territorial Claims – PM", *ArmenPress*, August 31, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1198730>.

was behind this move. The European Parliament, in its resolution adopted on 24 October, accused Azerbaijan of human rights violations and made its anti-Azerbaijani bias clear. US President Joe Biden, who seemed to be in a hurry to end his term successfully by concluding a peace treaty, sent a letter to the President of Azerbaijan<sup>31</sup> and the Prime Minister of Armenia through his Special Representative M. Carpenter, which was delivered on 21-22 October, and called on the Azerbaijani side to sign a peace treaty with Armenia before the end of the year. In the letter sent to Pashinyan, it was emphasized that the US is ready to take “bold initiatives” for the peace treaty and stated “Finalizing the remaining articles of the peace agreement will require persistence, ingenuity and compromise. But putting patriotism above politics, you have courageously and consistently chosen the path of peace - and I encourage you to finalize an agreement this year.”<sup>32</sup>

In response to the increasing statements of the opposition, militant and radical organizations of the Diaspora and pro-Armenian third parties that the Karabakh issue has not yet been resolved, that ethnic cleansing and genocide crimes have been committed in Karabakh, and that the OSCE Minsk Group should be reinstated, Azerbaijan asked Armenia to make a statement that the Minsk Group has ceased to function and therefore ceased to exist. Pashinyan's response was that the Minsk Group will cease to exist only if a peace treaty is signed.<sup>33</sup>

The most credible and convincing response to the allegations that Karabakh Armenians were forcibly displaced and subjected to ethnic cleansing came from Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson M. Zakharova. At a press conference on 16 October, the Russian spokesperson stated with clarity that the Armenians who left Karabakh did so of their own accord, that they were not forced, that they had the opportunity to return, that Baku was taking constructive steps to ensure the return of the population which had left their birthplaces, and that if there were those who wanted to return to the homes they had left, they could take advantage of this opportunity.<sup>34</sup> As expected, this statement caused great discomfort and even reaction in the circles exploiting the issue. The reaction of a Karabakh Armenian “parliamentarian” who fled Karabakh and condemned the Russian spokesperson explains a lot: “Of course,

31 Ali Gasimov, “President Joe Biden Sends Letter to President İlham Aliyev”, *Trend News Agency*, October 21, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3959437.html>.

32 “Biden Sends Letter to Pashinyan, Encouraging Finalization of Peace Agreement with Azerbaijan This Year”, *ArmenPress*, October 22, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202956>.

33 Matanat Nasibova, “Azerbaijan's Call for Minsk Group's End Meets Armenian Defiance”, *Caliber*, August 16, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/azerbaijan-s-call-for-minsk-group-s-end-meets-armenian-defiance>.

34 Elchin Mehdiyev, “Azerbaijan Provides Opportunity for Armenian Population of Karabakh to Return to Their Homes - Official”, *Trend News Agency*, October 16, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3957795.html>.



every Artsakh Armenian dreams about returning to Artsakh. But there is one important condition: that cannot happen in the presence or even in the vicinity of the Azerbaijanis.”

Another very revealing development took place on 25 November. A former Nagorno-Karabagh official, who opted to stay in Karabagh instead of leaving for Armenia was detained on espionage charges following his visit to Armenia months after the regions return to Azerbaijan sovereignty and then sentenced to 18 years of imprisonment.<sup>35</sup>

The Armenian and Azerbaijani delegations completed in late August the work they had begun in April to establish the principles for delimitation of the border between the two countries, which they had promised to conclude by 1 July. The Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the two countries announced that the domestic legal process had begun for the agreement to enter into force. In Armenia, the first step in this process, the Constitutional Court’s review of the constitutionality of the treaty before parliamentary ratification, was completed at the end of September with a positive decision. The treaty was ratified by the National Assembly’s Foreign Relations Committee on 21 October<sup>36</sup> and by the Plenary Session on 23 October<sup>37</sup>. The final stage, presidential ratification, was carried out simultaneously by the Presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia on 25 October.<sup>38</sup>

In a statement by the Office of the Armenian Prime Ministry Press Office, it was stated that on 13 September, US Secretary of State called PM Pashinyan and the two sides exchanged views on the peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan.<sup>39</sup> On 14 September, the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia arrived in Yerevan and met with Pashinyan, reiterating that the opening of Russian transportation routes is possible within the framework of the 2020 Ceasefire Agreement. In a statement released by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of

35 Former Nagorno-Karabakh Official Sentenced to 18 Years in Jail for Espionage,” Public Radio of Armenia, last modified November 22, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/11/22/former-nagorno-karabakh-official-sentenced-to-18-years-in-jail-for-espionage/>.

36 “Armenian Parliament Approves Regulations of Commissions on Border Delimitation with Azerbaijan”, *Caliber*, October 21, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/armenian-parliament-approves-regulations-ofcommissions-on-border-delimitation-with-azerbaijan?ysclid=m32pxrrqiz504881186>.

37 Hoory Minoryan, “Armenia’s National Assembly Ratifies Border Delimitation Bill”, *The Armenian Weekly*, October 23, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/10/23/armenias-national-assembly-ratifiesborder-delimitation-bill/#:~:text=YEREVAN%E2%80%94The%20National%20Assembly%20of%20the,favor%20and%20no%20dissenting%20votes>.

38 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan Confirm Ratification of The Regulation on Joint Activity of Border Commissions”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, October 25, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/25/presidents-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan-confirm-ratification-of-theregulation-on-joint-activity-of-border-commissions/>.

39 “Secretary Blinken’s Call with Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan”, *U.S. Departman of State*, September 13, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-call-with-armenian-prime-minister-pashinyan-17/>.

Azerbaijan, it was stated that the US Secretary of State made a phone call to the President of Azerbaijan on 16 September.<sup>40</sup> According to the spokesperson, Blinken reaffirmed the importance of a lasting and honorable peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan and expressed satisfaction with recent developments between the parties, including the agreement on the principles of demarcation.

Armenia and Azerbaijan's Ministers of Foreign Affairs, who were in New York to attend the 79<sup>th</sup> session of the UN General Assembly, held another trilateral meeting on 26 September at the invitation of the US Secretary of State.<sup>41</sup> In similar statements, it was noted that the parties agreed to make additional efforts to finalize the "Agreement on Peace and Establishment of Interstate Relations" as soon as possible. It appears that no concrete progress was achieved at the meeting. Indeed, a week after this meeting, Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Azerbaijan lacked the "political will" to sign a peace deal with Armenia and may be planning further military action against it.<sup>42</sup> The Azerbaijani side, on the other hand, continued to reiterate its assessment of Armenia's armament initiatives as attempts to avenge its defeat, arguing that foreign powers, particularly France, were provoking Armenia against Azerbaijan in line with their own geopolitical interests. An Armenian government statement noted that during Pashinyan's, visit to Paris together with Mirzoyan for the Francophonie Meeting, he met with the French President on 3 October where the peace process was discussed and France's constant support was confirmed. Pashinyan praised France's support for Armenia in the international arena.<sup>43</sup>

The President of Azerbaijan and the Prime Minister of Armenia, who attended the BRICS meeting hosted by Russia in Kazan, held a bilateral meeting on the margins of this meeting on 24 October. They discussed their common issues and asked their Foreign Ministers to conclude and sign the peace agreement as soon as possible.<sup>44</sup> Since the two leaders were sitting next to each other, they conversed with each other during the meeting.

40 "U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a phone call to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev", *President of the Republic of Azerbaijan*, September 16, 2024, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/66844>.

41 "U.S. Hosts Key Meeting Between Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York", *The Armenian Report*, September 26, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/25/presidents-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan-confirmratification-of-the-regulation-on-joint-activity-of-border-commissions/>.

42 "Armenia's Foreign Minister Says Azerbaijan Lacks 'Political Will' to Sign Peace Deal, Warns of Possible Military Action", *Zartong*, October 2, 2024, <https://zartongmedia.com/2024/10/02/armeniasforeign-minister-says-azerbaijan-lacks-political-will-to-sign-peace-deal-warns-of-possible-military-action/>.

43 "French President Reaffirms Unconditional Support to Armenia During Meeting with Pashinyan", *ArmenPress*, October 3, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201440>.

44 Burç Erüygür, "Azerbaijani President, Armenian Premier Meet on Sidelines of BRICS Summit", *Anadolu Agency*, October 24, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/azerbaijani-president-armenianpremier-meet-on-sidelines-of-brics-summit/3373258>.



In his speech at the BRICS conference, Pashinyan stated that 80-90% of the draft peace treaty had been agreed upon with Azerbaijan, provided information on the agreed articles, reiterated their readiness to sign a treaty covering them. He criticized Azerbaijan's linking the signing of the treaty to the amendment of the Constitution, and stated that the recent ruling of the Constitutional Court proved that the allegations of territorial claims in the Constitution were invalid.<sup>45</sup>

Armenia's participation to COP29 in Baku was expected to provide not only further international cooperation on climate change but also to build peace in South Caucasus. However, Armenia chose to exploit this event to further its demands and ambitions with the backing and pressure of third parties. For instance, ahead of COP29, World Council of Churches (WCC) based in Geneva, where Aram I, Catholicos of Antelias serves as president of the WCC for the Oriental Orthodox churches, urged Azerbaijan to release prisoners of Karabagh background and declared a world wide day of prayer for Armenia on Sunday, 10 November, one day before COP29 started. The radical ARF declared its support on 9 November. Freedom House issued a press release on 11 November accusing Azerbaijan of ethnic cleansing. Support was also expressed in the US Congress and EU Parliament. Armenia's last minute refusal to participate in the conference was the final blow to relations and cooperation.<sup>46</sup>

According to Azerbaijan sources, the three impediments to finalize the agreement are, territorial claims in the Armenian Constitution, ongoing 'international legal warfare' and the presence of the EU monitoring mission at the common border. On 22 November, in a TV interview, Pashinyan said that Armenia offered to withdraw EU monitoring mission from sections of the border that have been delimited. An official from the EU mission said on 25 November that their mandate expires on 19 February next year and that there is still no decision to extend the term of the mission.<sup>47</sup>

At the same interview Pashinyan also criticized again the 1990 declaration of independence, which is part of the constitution, which also calls for international recognition of "genocide in Ottoman Turkey and Western Armenia". He drew parallels between that reference and Azerbaijan's claims

---

45 "The Prime Minister again Offered Azerbaijan to Sign The Peace Treaty", *Radar Armenia*, October 24, 2024, <https://radar.am/en/news/politics-2659552253/#:~:text=RA%20Prime%20Minister%20Nikol%20Pashinyan,each%20other%20in%20the%20future>.

46 "Joint Statement: COP29 is Being Used as a Cover for Ethnic Cleansing," World Council of Churches, last modified November 11, 2024, <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/joint-statement-cop29-is-being-used-as-a-cover-for-ethnic-cleansing>.

47 "Azerbaijani FM Comments on Armenia's Non-Participation in COP29," Trend News Agency, last modified November 12, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3968699.html>.

of “Western Azerbaijan”. He said: “But when we say ‘Western Armenia’, don’t we think it irritates some people? Just like they irritate us by saying ‘Western Azerbaijan’”.<sup>48</sup>

### 3. Armenia’s Foreign Relations

Since Armenia is dependent on Russia in many ways and has needs, primarily economic ones, which cannot be substituted from other sources in the short term, Armenia’s attempts to cautiously maintain its relations with Russia, which has traditionally been its main foreign policy compass, yet to break out of Russia’s control and to seek new alternatives with the assurance of the West, which encourages and supports Armenia in this regard, continued during this period with the assessment that Russia is no longer the guarantee of its future. In this search for a new balance, contacts and initiatives that could provide a favorable solution to its relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye were at the forefront.

Armenia’s stance towards the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which constitutes the first step in loosening its ties with Russia, based on its own justifiable and defensible arguments, continued to increase during the period. On 31 May, it was announced that the Armenian Minister of Defense would not attend the meeting of the Council of Defense Ministers in Almaty.<sup>49</sup> On 11 June, Russia criticized Armenia for cutting off its contribution to the budget of the organization. Pashinyan’s non-attendance at the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) meeting in Turkmenistan in May caused additional unease in Russia. The Russian Ambassador to Yerevan was summoned to Moscow for consultations on 24 May, as a diplomatic warning to Armenia.<sup>50</sup> On 1 September, Pashinyan officially announced the freeze of his country’s participation in the CSTO meetings “at all levels”.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs announced on 4 September that Pashinyan would attend the CIS summit in Moscow.<sup>52</sup>

On 18 September, Pashinyan said in a statement: “We have suspended our membership in the CSTO not only because the CSTO does not fulfill its

48 “Pashinian Blasts Armenia’s Independence Declaration,” Azatutyun, last modified November 14, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33202094.html>.

49 “Armenia Skips CSTO Defense Ministers’ Meeting in Almaty”, *ArmenPress*, May 31, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1138417>.

50 “Russian Envoy to Armenia Summoned to Moscow for Consultations — Foreign Ministry”, *TASS*, May 24, 2024, <https://tass.com/politics/1792949>.

51 “Armenia’s Decision to Freeze Participation in CSTO Sufficient for Now, PM Pashinyan Says”, *APA*, August 31, 2024, <https://en.apa.az/cis-countries/armenias-decision-to-freeze-participation-in-cstosufficient-for-now-pm-pashinyan-says-446794>

52 “Armenia to Participate in CIS Informal Summit”, *ArmenPress*, September 4, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199014>.

security obligations towards Armenia, but also because, in our opinion, the CSTO creates threats to Armenia's security and Armenia's continued existence, sovereignty and statehood."<sup>53</sup> Russia immediately rejected these statements and Kremlin spokesman Peskov said: "We must categorically disagree with Mr. Pashinyan. The CSTO cannot and does not pose any threat to Armenia's sovereignty. On the contrary, this organization guards the sovereignty of its member states. We will patiently convey this position to the Armenian leadership. Armenia remains a 'close partner' of Russia and 'contacts' between the two nations will continue."<sup>54</sup> Armenia did not participate in the CSTO joint military exercises that began in Almaty on 26 September.<sup>55</sup> Armenia once again boycotted another CSTO Summit held in Astana the last week of November. On 25 November Mirzoyan announced that he too would not be taking part.<sup>56</sup>

In a speech in Kazakhstan on 5 October, the head of Russia's Federal Security Service argued that Western powers are pressuring Armenia to leave the CSTO in order to secure a military position. He stated "In exchange for preferential arms supplies and security guarantees, the West is seeking to get the Armenian government to withdraw from the CSTO, which would make Yerevan even more dependent on NATO in its future relations with Baku. The EU monitoring mission along Armenia's border with Azerbaijan is conducting intelligence activities against Russia and our partners in the interests of a specific NATO country".<sup>57</sup> The European External Action Service spokesperson immediately responded to these statements and called them nonsense.<sup>58</sup>

On 3 October, Armenia's Minister of Foreign Affairs congratulated the new NATO Secretary General and expressed Armenia's expectation for closer cooperation with NATO.<sup>59</sup>

53 Shoghik Galstian, "Pashinian Calls Russian-Led Alliance Security Threat to Armenia", *Azattyun Radiokayan*, September 18, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/33124969.html>.

54 "Moscow Categorically Disagrees with Armenian PM's Criticism of CSTO — Kremlin", *TASS*, September 18, 2024, <https://tass.com/politics/1844713>.

55 "Armenia Skips CSTO Drills In Kazakhstan", *Azattyun Radiokayan*, September 26, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32053026.html>.

56 Armenia's Premier Not to Participate in CSTO Summit in Astana," *ArmInfo*, last modified November 27, 2024, [https://arminfo.info/full\\_news.php?id=87400&lang=3](https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=87400&lang=3).

57 "Director of The Russian FSB: The West is Putting Pressure on Armenia, Forcing it to Leave The CSTO", *TopWar*, October 4, 2024, <https://en.topwar.ru/251343-direktor-fsb-zapad-okazyvaet-davlenie-naarmeniju-prinuzhdaja-ee-vyjti-iz-odkb.html>.

58 "Exclusive: EU Slams 'Nonsense' Comments by Russian FSB Chief about Armenia", *ArmenPress*, October 4, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201510>.

59 "Armenian Foreign Minister Expressed His Hope for A Strong Partnership with The New NATO Secretary General", *ARKA News Agency*, October 10, 2024, [https://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenian\\_foreign\\_minister\\_expressed\\_his\\_hope\\_for\\_a\\_strong\\_partnership\\_with\\_the\\_new\\_nato\\_secretary\\_general](https://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenian_foreign_minister_expressed_his_hope_for_a_strong_partnership_with_the_new_nato_secretary_general).

The Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting was held on 7 October and the summit meeting was held on 8 October in Moscow.<sup>60</sup> Mirzoyan, who attended the meeting of the Foreign Ministers, did not participate in and did not sign the two resolutions adopted at the meeting: “Principles Of Cooperation In Ensuring Security In Eurasia” and “Inadmissibility Of The Use Of Unilateral Restrictive Measures In International Relations”.<sup>61</sup>

Pashinyan, who attended the summit, also held a bilateral meeting with the President of Russia on this occasion. The spokesperson of the Prime Minister’s Office said in a statement that during this meeting it was agreed that the Armenian border crossing with Iran will be under the sole and complete control of the Armenian border security forces, and that the Russian troops guarding the border with Iran and Türkiye will be joined by the Armenian border security forces, starting from the new year. This development has led to media speculation regarding the status and future of Russian military bases in Armenia and the troops stationed there. Russian sources emphasized that the issue is determined by bilateral agreements and cannot be changed by unilateral declarations of intention.<sup>62</sup> Pashinyan also stated that such an issue is not on the agenda.

It was reported in the press that on the occasion of the CIS Moscow summit, which was also attended by the President of Azerbaijan, the Russian President wanted to organize a trilateral meeting, but Armenia refused to do so. The Russian President held bilateral talks with the parties, thus Russia was denied the opportunity to take the initiative in the peace agreement process.<sup>63</sup>

In his speech at the summit, Pashinyan made a detailed statement focusing on the “Crossroads of Peace” project, “The essence of this project is as follows: Armenia is ready to ensure the passage of vehicles, cargo, passengers, pipelines, cables through its territory: from Georgia to Iran and vice versa, from Turkey to Azerbaijan and vice versa. We are ready to ensure the passage of vehicles, cargo, passengers, pipelines and cables from the main part of Azerbaijan and the Autonomous Republic of Nakhchevan. Responding to our

60 Catherine Putz, “Commonwealth of Independent States Gathers in Moscow for Annual Heads of State Meeting”, *The Diplomat*, October 9, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/10/commonwealth-of-independent-states-gathers-in-moscow-for-annual-heads-of-state-meeting/>.

61 “Armenia Didn’t Join Two Statements at CIS Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting”, *ArmenPress*, October 7, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201731>.

62 Catherine Putz, “Commonwealth of Independent States Gathers in Moscow for Annual Heads of State Meeting”, *The Diplomat*, October 9, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/10/commonwealth-of-independent-states-gathers-in-moscow-for-annual-heads-of-state-meeting/>.

63 “Armenia-Russia-Azerbaijan Trilateral Meeting Not Planned, Says Kremlin”, *ArmenPress*, October 8, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201765>.

proposals, Azerbaijan emphasizes that if Armenia does not want to open regional communications, Azerbaijan will use the opportunities provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran to connect with Nakhichevan. Of course, we do not object, because this is a matter of relations between the two sovereign countries. But I want to emphasize once again that Armenia wants the opening of regional channels and that we are ready to provide transport communications through our territory on the same terms as provided by the Islamic Republic of Iran. Moreover, we are ready to make certain simplifications in border control procedures within the framework of respect for the principles of reciprocity, equality, sovereignty and jurisdiction of the parties.”<sup>64</sup>

In an interview with Russian television on 9 October, Russia’s Deputy Prime Minister in charge of the issue suggested that the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan could be opened for trade and travel only with Russia’s participation, referring to Article 9 of the ceasefire agreement and that Armenia has not rejected the agreement.<sup>65</sup> On 12 October, Pashinyan reiterated that it is unacceptable to focus only on Article 9 of the 9 November 2020 Trilateral Ceasefire Agreement while the provisions of other articles are not being fulfilled.<sup>66</sup>

On 15 August, the Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs criticized that history books in Armenia’s school curriculum, in contradiction to the 2022 agreement between the parties to preserve historical memories, distorted the history of the South Caucasus in the 18th and 19th centuries to the detriment of Russia, and claimed forced annexation of Eastern Armenia under the Turkmenchay Treaty of 1827. In this context, the Russian Ministry accused the West of “rewriting” history.<sup>67</sup> The Armenian Ministry of Education immediately announced that the necessary corrections would be made. This is undoubtedly an example of how history can be manipulated for political purposes.<sup>68</sup>

The close relations with Iran remained active during the period. On 30 May, the new Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was temporarily appointed to replace the Iranian Foreign Minister who died in a helicopter crash, emphasized to his Armenian counterpart the importance of the implementation of the Supreme Leader’s statements on the realization of strategic goals between Iran and

---

64 “Armenia Never Agreed to the Involvement of Third Countries in Ensuring the Security of Communications - PM”, *ArmenPress*, October 8, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201804>.

65 “Russia Insists On Key Role In Armenian-Azeri Transport Links”, *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, October 9, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33152459.html>.

66 “Unacceptable to Single Out One Article When Others Are Unfulfilled, PM Pashinyan Says on 2020 Trilateral Statement”, *ArmenPress*, October 12, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202121>.

67 Fatima Latifova, “Armenian Education Ministry Rewriting History: Claim Filed against Russia”, *AzerNews*, August 16, 2024, <https://www.azernews.az/nation/229956.html>.

68 “After Stern Criticism from Russia, Armenia Amends History Textbook”, *Asbarez*, August 16, 2024, <https://www.asbarez.com/after-stern-criticism-from-russia-armenia-amends-history-textbook/>.

Armenia.<sup>69</sup> Pashinyan visited Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of the 9th President of Iran and met with Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei on this occasion.<sup>70</sup> The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the new cabinet, Mr. Abbas Araghchi, also stated that under President Masoud Pezeshkian, Iran will continue to seek closer ties with Armenia and support its territorial integrity. The new minister highlighted the geopolitical and strategic importance of the Caucasus region for Iran.<sup>71</sup>

Pashinyan, who went to Kazan as an invitee to the BRICS summit, held a bilateral meeting with the Iranian President on 24 October. He declared that forging closer ties with Iran remains a priority for Armenia.<sup>72</sup>

Iran was invited for the first time to attend the meeting of the Intergovernmental Council of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Eurasian Economic Forum held in Yerevan in early October. Iran participated at the level of the First Vice President of the Republic.<sup>73</sup> During the high-level talks with the Vice-President, it was stated that Armenia could be a bridge and gateway for Iran to Europe and Eurasia. The goal was set to increase the trade volume, which was \$100-150 million in 2014-2015 and increased to \$232 million in 2017, to \$3 billion.<sup>74</sup>

On 7 June, the Secretary General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) paid a first official visit to Armenia. A statement issued after his meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs expressed the hope that the discussions during the visit would contribute to expanding the possibilities for cooperation between Armenia and the SCO.<sup>75</sup>

US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs O'Brien, accompanied by an inter-ministerial government delegation, visited Armenia

69 "Iranian, Armenian Officials Pledge Continued Collaboration", *Tasnim News Agency*, May 30, 2024, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2024/05/30/3095715/iranian-armenian-officials-pledgecontinued-collaboration#:~:text=Baqeri%20highlighted%20the%20significance%20of,and%20stability%20in%20the%20Caucasus>.

70 "Pashinyan Meets with Iran's Khamenei in Tehran", *ArmenPress*, July 30, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1196706>.

71 "Iran's Policy On Armenia Unchanged, Says New FM", *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, August 23, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33090278.html>.

72 "PM Pashinyan Holds Meeting with Iranian President" *ArmenPress*, October 24, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203086>.

73 "Iran's Veep in Armenia for Eurasian Economic Forum", *Tasnim News Agency*, October 1, 2024, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2024/10/01/3169214/iran-s-veep-in-armenia-for-eurasianeconomic-forum>.

74 "Armenia Could Act As Bridge Connecting Iran with Europe And Eurasia to Expand Iran's Trade in the Region", *Tabnak*, October 2, 2024, [https://www.tabnak.ir/en/news/5188/%C2%A0-armeniairan%E2%80%99s-gateway-to-eurasia-tehran-yerevan-seek-expanding-bilateral-trade-to-us\\$-3-blm-%C2%A0%C2%A0](https://www.tabnak.ir/en/news/5188/%C2%A0-armeniairan%E2%80%99s-gateway-to-eurasia-tehran-yerevan-seek-expanding-bilateral-trade-to-us$-3-blm-%C2%A0%C2%A0)

75 "SCO Secretary-General Meets with Foreign Minister of Armenia", *The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation*, June 8, 2024, <https://eng.sectso.org/20240608/1388471.html>.



on 10-12 June and held high-level talks.<sup>76</sup> During the meeting with the Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs, a detailed and multidimensional statement was issued, outlining the roadmap for the future close relations between the parties. The parties set out a vision for deepening relations in the coming year, which concretely envisaged a Memorandum of Understanding and a transition from bilateral dialogue status to a Strategic Partnership Commission. O'Brien also emphasized the importance of a trade route linking Central Asia to the Mediterranean and Europe, stressed the need to establish this connection as soon as possible, and expressed the importance of this project to the US, excluding Russia, without using the term Zangezur corridor. During the visit, a customs agreement was signed<sup>77</sup> and closer defense and security ties were promised.

Armenia's Chief of the General Staff attended the European Military Commanders' Conference in Germany and held a bilateral meeting with the French general on 10 June.<sup>78</sup> During the meeting, it was agreed to further enhance military cooperation. On 18 June, the French Minister of Defense announced the decision to sell 36 CAESAR self-propelled cannons to Armenia.<sup>79</sup> The French Minister of Foreign Affairs paid his departing visit to Armenia on 15-16 September, reaffirming his country's strong support for Armenia, stating that the "defence" issue was on his agenda, emphasizing France's deepening military ties with Armenia and claiming that the shipment of military equipment was not aimed at escalation but to ensure stability.<sup>80</sup> In his speech to the UN General Assembly on 26 September, the French President stated that "France stands firmly with Armenia in the face of pressure from Azerbaijan".<sup>81</sup>

On 9-10 October, bilateral defense consultations were held in Berlin between the delegations of the Ministries of Defense of Armenia and Germany. In a statement, the sides expressed satisfaction with bilateral defense cooperation in 2024, noted the great potential for further development of these relations, and agreed on a cooperation program for 2025.<sup>82</sup>

76 "Assistant Secretary O'Brien's Travel to Armenia", *U.S. Department of State*, June 7, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/assistant-secretary-obriens-travel-to-armenia/>.

77 "Agreement on Mutual Assistance of Customs Authorities Signed Between Armenia and The USA", *ArmenPress*, June 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1139307>.

78 "Chief of Armenian Armed Forces General Staff meets with France's Chief of Army Staff", *ArmenPress*, June 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1139319>.

79 "France Hails Deal To Provide Armenia with Howitzers As 'New Important Milestone'", *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, June 18, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-france-defense-russia-azerbaijan-howitzer/32997862.html>.

80 "The Start of The Two-Day Visit of The Foreign Minister of France to Armenia", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, September 15, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/09/15/sejourne\\_armenia\\_visit/12825](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/09/15/sejourne_armenia_visit/12825).

81 "France's Macron Deplores 'Azeri Pressure on Armenia'", *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, September 26, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33136150.html>.

82 "Bilateral Defence Consultations Between Armenia and Germany Held in Berlin", *ArmenPress*, October 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202082>.

On 31 May, following Pashinyan's accusation that the two so-called allies were acting against Armenia's sovereignty, in early June, the Belarusian President Lukashenko made a statement accusing Armenia of its relations with Azerbaijan and its attitude towards the CSTO, which caused great reaction in Armenia. Both sides recalled their ambassadors<sup>83</sup> and Pashinyan stated that neither he, nor his government officials would travel to Belarus while Lukashenko was in office. On 12 June he announced in the Parliament that he had decided to withdraw from the Russian-led security organization and that the timing of the withdrawal would be decided afterwards.<sup>84</sup> On 13 June, the Russian President's press spokesperson stated that Russia expects the alliance relations between the two countries to continue and that contacts with the Armenian side will continue. On 25 October, the President of Belarus and the Armenian Prime Minister, who were in Kazan for the BRICS summit, met briefly on this occasion and posed for the press.<sup>85</sup>

On 9 June, Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs protested with a diplomatic note against the visit of an Armenian delegation to Bucha, the symbolic victim city of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, in early June.<sup>86</sup> On 15 June, Armenian Security Council Secretary A. Grigoryan participated in the "Ukraine Peace Formula" summit in Switzerland. On 17 June, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that Armenia and Ukraine held political consultations in Kiev.<sup>87</sup> On 28-29 June, Mirzoyan attended the Dubrovnik forum in Croatia, where he also held a bilateral meeting with the Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs.<sup>88</sup> This demonstrated that Armenia can act independently against Russia.

On 17 June, the US announced that it has established a new department to help establish direct contacts with local and regional governments in Armenia, and for this purpose a forum was being organized in Armenia, which would bring

83 Ani Avetisyan, "Armenia Recalls Ambassador from Belarus Amid Rising Tension with Russia", *Eurasianet*, June 14, 2024,

<https://eurasianet.org/armenia-recalls-ambassador-from-belarus-amidrising-tension-with-russia>.

84 "Tensions Continue to Rise Between Armenia, Belarus", *Azattyun Radiokayan*, June 14, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/32993532.html>.

85 "Pashinyan, Lukashenko Meet During BRICS Summit", *ArmenPress*, October 25, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203185>.

86 Elsa Court, "Moscow Issues Protest Note to Yerevan after Armenian Delegation Visits Bucha", *The Kyiv Independent*, June 9, 2024, <https://kyivindependent.com/moscow-issues-protest-note-to-yerevan-after-armenian-delegation-visits-bucha/>.

87 "Political Consultations between The Foreign Ministries of Armenia And Ukraine", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia*, June 17, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/17/arm\\_ua\\_politicalconsultation/12697](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/17/arm_ua_politicalconsultation/12697).

88 "The meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Ukraine", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia*, June 29, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/29/Mirzoyan\\_Kuleba/12721](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/29/Mirzoyan_Kuleba/12721).



together mayors and local officials from both countries for a two-day event.<sup>89</sup> On this occasion, it was reported that the US Assistant Secretary of State R. Verma would visit Armenia on 17 June with a delegation of US local officials.<sup>90</sup>

Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan visited Lithuania<sup>91</sup> on 20 June and Estonia on 26-27 June. President of the National Assembly of Armenia Alen Simonyan also paid an official visit to Latvia on 26 June.<sup>92</sup> Armenia's close ties with the Baltic states which are known to be anti-Russian have been criticized by Russia.

In 2019, after Pashinyan's meeting with the India's Prime Minister on the margins of the UN General Assembly meetings, Armenia-India relations have undergone a significant revitalization in the political, economic and military spheres. The official visit of India's Minister of Foreign Affairs to Armenia in October 2021, which was the first of its kind, and Mirzoyan's subsequent visit to India to attend a conference, led to the multidimensional development of these relations. During the period, this relationship developed especially in the field of defense, with almost 90% of Armenia's total arms purchases coming from India.<sup>93</sup> Armenia was able to utilize the India card to establish a front against Türkiye, convincing India that it could create a counterbalance against the Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Türkiye cooperation. This relationship has gained a political and economic dimension with the envisaged project of a "North-South Trade Corridor Project" through India-Iran-Armenia-Georgia.

The Secretary General of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation visited Armenia on 1 July on the occasion of Armenia assuming the Organization's Chairmanship-in-Office.<sup>94</sup>

Delegations of the Armenian and Georgian foreign ministries met in Tbilisi on 2 July under the chairmanship of the two ministers. During the talks, bilateral and multilateral cooperation was discussed and issues on the agenda of the

---

89 "U.S. Launches New Department to Liaise with Local Governments in Armenia", *Asbarez*, June 17, 2024, <https://www.asbarez.com/u-s-launches-new-department-to-liaise-with-local-governments-in-armenia/>.

90 "US First Deputy Secretary of State to Visit Armenia", *Caliber*, June 14, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/us-first-deputy-secretary-of-state-to-visit-armenia>.

91 "Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Lithuania" ", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia*, June 20, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/20/Mirzoyan\\_Landsbergis/12704](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/20/Mirzoyan_Landsbergis/12704).

92 "Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Estonia", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia*, June 27, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/27/Mirzoyan\\_Tsahkna/12715](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/27/Mirzoyan_Tsahkna/12715).

93 "Armenia Becomes Largest Importer of Weapons from India", *MassisPost*, July 24, 2024, <https://massispost.com/2024/07/armenia-becomes-largest-importer-of-weapons-from-india/>.

94 "Armenian Parliament Speaker Receives Secretary General of Black Sea Economic Cooperation", *ArmenPress*, July 1, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1194838>.

strategic partnership established between the two countries were also included. Comments in the press indicated that the transportation of military equipment to be purchased from France through Georgia was also an important issue.

The Armenian Ministry of Defense announced on 6 July that the joint Armenia-US military exercise “Eagle Partner 2024” would be held in Armenia on 15-24 July in the framework of preparation for international peacekeeping missions, and would be attended by members of the peacekeeping brigade of the Armenian Armed Forces, the US, European and African armies and the Kansas National Guard.<sup>95</sup> Three US generals participated in the joint exercise and a joint peacekeeping exercise was held on these dates.<sup>96</sup>

From 13 to 16 October, Armenia’s Chief of Staff visited the US for talks on the occasion of an exhibition in Washington. On 16 October, he met with the US Chief of Staff, who praised the growing US-Armenia military ties and called for countering Russia’s “malign influence in the region”.<sup>97</sup>

S. Power, the head of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), visited Armenia on 8-11 July.<sup>98</sup> Power expressed that it was being investigated whether the exodus of Karabakh constituted ethnic cleansing or not, that the return of Karabakh Armenians should be ensured, and announced that her office was providing an additional \$2.4 million to support the personal data protection program.<sup>99</sup> On 5 September, USAID announced that aid to Armenia had been increased by \$130 million, bringing the total amount of aid to \$250 million.<sup>100</sup>

Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan visited Washington on 9-10 July as an invitee to NATO’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit.<sup>101</sup> Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Galuzin made a statement on the issue, saying that “Russia deeply regrets Armenia’s participation in the NATO summit”. Criticizing Armenia’s position, Galuzin also warned that “by deepening

95 “Armenia-U.S. Joint Exercise “EAGLE PARTNER 2024” Will Be Held in Armenia, *ArmenPress*, July 6, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1195178>.

96 “The Joint Armenia-U.S. Military Exercise “EAGLE PARTNER 2024””, *Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia*, July 15, 2024, <https://mil.am/en/news/12290>.

97 “Top U.S., Armenian Generals Meet in Washington”, *Azattyun Radiokayan*, October 17, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/33162699.html>.

98 “USAID Head to Visit Armenia”, *ED News*, July 8, 2024, <https://ednews.net/en/news/world/669040-usaid-head-to-visit-armenia>.

99 “U.S. ‘Investigates’ Karabakh Exodus to Decide if it’s Ethnic Cleansing”, *The California Courier*, July 11, 2024, <https://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/u-s-investigates-karabakh-exodus-to-decide-if-its-ethnic-cleansing/>.

100 “USAID to Increase Assistance to Armenia to \$250 Million”, *Report News Agency*, September 11, 2024, <https://report.az/en/region/usa-id-to-increase-assistance-to-armenia-to-250-million/>.

101 “Armenian Foreign Minister Takes Part in an Official Reception in Washington”, *ArmenPress*, July 10, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1195405>.

cooperation at such a pace with those whose goal is the ‘strategic defeat’ of Russia, Yerevan risks seriously destabilising the situation in the South Caucasus, to the detriment, including its own security.”<sup>102</sup>

After Georgia, U. Zeya, US Under Secretary, visited Armenia on 17 July and discussed the democratic process of governance and the fight against corruption.<sup>103</sup> Another US Deputy Secretary of State, J. Huck, met with Mirzoyan on 19 September, and the two sides emphasized the importance of joint efforts to develop strategic partnership relations.<sup>104</sup> Accompanied by L. Bono, the US special envoy to the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace talks, Huck was received by Pashinyan and briefed on the status of the peace talks and the opening of transportation routes.<sup>105</sup>

The campaign process for the presidential elections to be held in the US in November 2024, like in to every campaign period, prompted Armenian organizations and lobbies to intensify the pressure, even blackmail, on the candidates. The presidential candidate of the Democratic Party has experienced her share of this. It has been expressed in written statements that she will not be voted for unless she takes a more explicit pro-Armenian stance.<sup>106</sup> As a result, the presidential candidate, Vice President Harris, echoing President Biden’s earlier statement, issued the following message on 23 September to mark Armenia’s national day:

“To the Armenian American community:

I send my best wishes to you as you celebrate Armenian Independence Day, which marks the day that the Armenian people voted to secede from the Soviet Union to be a free, independent nation.

While we celebrate, we must also never forget the Armenian Genocide, when an estimated 1.5 million Armenians were deported, massacred, and marched to their deaths. It is a tragedy that continues to shape the identity of the Armenian people. The Armenian American community’s

102 “Galuzin: Russia Extremely Regrets Armenia’s Participation in Nato Summit in Washington”, *News.am*, July 11, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/833511.html>.

103 “Under Secretary Zeya’s Travel to Georgia and Armenia”, *U.S. Department of State*, July 10, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/under-secretary-zeyas-travel-to-georgia-and-armenia/>.

104 “Mirzoyan and US Deputy Secretary of State Huck Discuss Regulation of Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations”, *News.am*, September 19, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/843355.html>.

105 “Prime Minister Pashinyan Receives the Delegation Led by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joshua Huck”, *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, September 20, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/09/20/Nikol-Pashinyan-meeting-20-09>.

106 Alex Manoukian, “Kamala Harris: A Disappointing Partner for the Armenian Community”, *The Armenian Weekly*, August 27, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/08/27/kamala-harris-adisappointing-partner-for-the-armenian-community/>.

resilience remains a source of inspiration in our collective American story.

I remain committed to a lasting peace between Armenia and its neighbors that respects sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

The right for Armenians displaced from Nagorno-Karabakh to return safely to their homes is vital to restoring dignity to the Armenian people and stability to the region.

I will continue to support Armenia in its efforts to strengthen democracy and foster stability in the region.

Armenia and its people have a rich history that inspires us all to strive for liberty and justice. I remain committed to deepening the bonds between our nations and fostering a partnership that uplifts our shared values and aspirations. Together, we can build a more secure, just and free world.

Warmly,<sup>107</sup>

In the run-up to an election where every vote counts, the other presidential candidate Trump did not hold back. The radical-militant Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), a radical-militant Armenian organization, announced the following social post by Trump on 23 October:

“Kamala Harris did NOTHING as 120,000 Armenian Christians were horrifically persecuted and forcibly displaced in Artsakh. Christians around the World will not be safe if Kamala Harris is President of the United States. When I am President, I will protect persecuted Christians, I will work to stop the violence and ethnic cleansing, and we will restore PEACE between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”<sup>108</sup>

ANCA’s Executive Director, who knows from experience that such rhetoric is politically motivated in order to win votes, stated that “While we are gratified to see that our community’s sustained engagement has forced ‘Artsakh’ [Karabakh] and Armenia into the national electoral discourse, we expect and

107 “Vice President Kamala Harris Commemorates Armenian Independence Day”, *The Armenian Weekly*, September 24 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/09/24/vice-president-kamala-harris-commemorates-armenian-independence-day/>.

108 “Trump Vows to Restore Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace if Elected, Slams Harris For Doing ‘Nothing’ During NK Ethnic Cleansing”, *ArmenPress*, October 24, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203077>.

deserve more than words” and listed some concrete expectations from Trump before the election. Shortly before the election, it was observed that the Armenian lobbies in the US sensing a Trump victory, were generally pro-Trump in their approach and called on voters to vote for Trump.

The future of the Metsamor Nuclear Power Plant has gained political and symbolic as well as technical significance in terms of Armenia’s relations with Russia and the US and its energy dependence. While the current plant, which is operated by the Russian state company Rosatom and whose lifespan has been extended until 2036, is to be refurbished by Rosatom,<sup>109</sup> the Pashinyan administration has shown interest in smaller modular units built by the US, signed a memorandum of understanding on civil nuclear cooperation with the US in 2022 and started negotiations with the US.<sup>110</sup> A US State Department spokesperson confirmed in August that the US was reviewing Armenia’s request for civil nuclear technology transfer.<sup>111</sup>

According to a report from the American University of Armenia, USAID has provided the university with \$1.8 million for the establishment of a new advanced biology and environmental sciences laboratory. On this occasion, the media reported that there are 13 biological laboratories in Armenia belonging to the Pentagon, where only Americans work.

On 10 July, Armenia announced the International Airports Association statement that China’s Southern Airlines will launch direct flights from Urumchi-Yerevan-Urumchi twice a week starting 3 September. This will be the first direct connection with China.<sup>112</sup> The Chinese Ambassador to Armenia also confirmed the news.

The Armenian Minister of Defense visited China in September, and during his meeting with his Chinese counterpart on 10 September, the two countries discussed closer military ties. The two countries have an “Agreement On

---

109 “A Joint Armenian-Russian Contract Has Been Signed”, *Armenian Nuclear Power Plant*, December 15, 2023,

<https://armeniannpp.am/en/info/noroutyouanner/storagrvel-e-hay-rousakan-hamatex-paymanagir.html>.

110 “The United States of America and the Republic of Armenia Sign a Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Civil Nuclear Cooperation”, *U.S. Department of State*, May 2, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-of-america-and-the-republic-of-armenia-sign-a-memorandum-of-understanding-concerning-strategic-civil-nuclear-cooperation/>.

111 Siranush Ghazanchyan, “US Confirms Nuclear Pact with Armenia ‘Under Consideration’”, *Public Radio of Armenia*, August 22, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/08/22/us-confirms-nuclear-pact-witharmenia-under-consideration-civilnet/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20has%20confirmed,written%20comments%20to%20CivilNet%20Tuesday>.

112 “For the First Time Flights to be Operated from Yerevan to China’s Urumqi City”, *ArmenPress*, July 10, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1195404>.

Military And Military-Technical Cooperation” signed in 2012. Armenia has not announced any arms purchases from China.<sup>113</sup>

The British Foreign Secretary’s statement in a message posted on social media on 23 September that Azerbaijan had “liberated” the occupied territories of Azerbaijan created negative reactions in Armenia. The Armenian Ambassador to the UK contacted the British Foreign Office and asked whether there was a change in the UK’s policy on “ethnic cleansing”.<sup>114</sup> The Armenian press also called the British minister “treacherous”.

Mirzoyan attended the Warsaw Security Forum on 1 October.<sup>115</sup> This was a first for an Armenian Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Heads of government of the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) member states met in Yerevan on 1 October to attend the organization’s Intergovernmental Council Session and the Plenary Session of the Eurasian Economic Forum.<sup>116</sup>

On 3 October, Prime Minister Pashinyan and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mirzoyan visited Paris to attend the Meeting of French Speaking Countries (Francophonie).<sup>117</sup> When French President Emmanuel Macron’s previously promised visit to Yerevan did not materialize, this was the occasion for the meeting Pashinyan had hoped for.

On 12 October, the EU Delegation in Yerevan announced that the EU would now provide €30 million to bolster Armenia’s budget, following €10 million in defense aid.<sup>118</sup>

113 “Armenian Defense Minister Visits China”, *Azattyun Radiokayan*, September 12, 2024, <https://www.azattyun.am/a/33117715.html>.

114 “UK Foreign Secretary Says Azerbaijan ‘Liberated’ Nagorno-Karabakh; Yerevan Reportedly Seeks Clarification from Foreign Office”, *Asbarez*, September 20, 2024, <https://www.asbarez.com/uk-foreign-secretary-says-azerbaijan-liberated-nagorno-karabakh-yerevan-reportedly-seeks-clarification-from-foreign-office/>.

115 “Participation of the Foreign Minister of Armenia in the Warsaw Security Forum”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia*, October 2, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/02/Mirzoyan\\_WSF/12879](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/02/Mirzoyan_WSF/12879).

116 “Armenia Hosts EEU Prime Ministerial Meeting”, *ArmenPress*, October 1, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201110>.

117 “Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s Working Visit to the French Republic”, *The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia*, October 3, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2024/10/03/Nikol-Pashinyan-visiting-France/>.

118 “Head Of EU Delegation to RA: We Will Unlock The Full Potential of Armenia-EU Relations”, *News.am*, October 12, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/847010.html>.

President Khachaturian visited Turkmenistan on 10 October to attend an international forum in memory of Makhtumkuli Fragi.<sup>119</sup> Khachaturian then paid an official visit to Kazakhstan on 14 October.<sup>120</sup>

On 7 November Pashinian attended the fifth summit of the European Political Community held in Budapest. Pashinian paid a visit to Vatican on 18 November and praised Armenia's "special" relationship with the Vatican as he was received by Pope Francis. Germany's Foreign Minister paid a days visit to Armenia on 19 November on her way to COP29 meeting in Baku. President of Poland paid a state visit to Armenia on 25 November.<sup>121</sup>

#### 4. Relations with Türkiye

The ongoing normalization process continued to have an impact during the period, with high-level contacts and mutual media reports reflecting the softening atmosphere. On 31 May, Armenian media reported that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said the following at the Efes-2024 exercise: "Armenia must get rid of the pernicious influence of third countries and its diaspora abroad, which will bring it closer to peace. The Armenian people must realize that their future is tied to the countries of the region, neighbors with whom they have coexisted for centuries. So it will be in the future. Armenia must also have the courage to do what is necessary."<sup>122</sup>

Supported by the West, Armenia continued to demand the immediate opening of the border crossing, even in a limited manner, as a concrete step in the normalization process at all levels throughout the period. In an interview with the press on 11 June, Ruben Rubinyan, the Armenian special envoy for the normalization process, complained that despite the agreement reached in July 2022, the Turkish side had not taken steps to open the border crossing with Armenia.<sup>123</sup>

---

119 "Working visit of the President Vahagn Khachaturyan to Turkmenistan", *The President of the Republic of Armenia*, October 10, 2024, <https://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2024/10/10/President-Vahagn-Khachaturyans-working-visit-to-Turkmenistan/>.

120 Adlet Seilkhanov, "Armenian President Vahagn Khachaturyan to Pay Official Visit to Kazakhstan", *"Kazinform" International News Agency*, October 12, 2024, <https://en.inform.kz/news/armenian-presidentvahagn-khachaturyan-to-pay-official-visit-to-kazakhstan-9f2ef9/>.

121 Polish President Arrives in Armenia for Meetings with Top Officials," *Caliber.Az*, last modified November 25, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/polish-president-arrives-in-armenia-for-meetings-with-top-officials>.

122 "Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Efes-2024 Tatbikatı'nın Seçkin Gözlemci Gününde Konuştu", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı*, May 30, 2024, <https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/haberler/detay/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-efes-2024-tatbikatinin-seckin-gozlemci-gununde-konustu>.

123 "Turkey Not Implementing Agreement on Border Opening with Armenia", *Asbarez*, June 11, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/turkey-not-implementing-agreement-on-border-opening-with-armenia/>.



On 18 June, President Erdoğan and Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan held a telephone conversation. They congratulated each other on Eid al-Adha and Vardavar feast and reaffirmed their political will to normalize relations without preconditions. The two leaders also emphasized the importance of the continuation of the talks between the two countries' special representatives and confirmed the agreements reached.<sup>124</sup> Three days after this call, Armenia announced that it officially recognized the independent State of Palestine<sup>125</sup> and this development was praised by Türkiye.

On 25 June, this time Foreign Ministers Hakan Fidan and Ararat Mirzoyan had a telephone conversation.<sup>126</sup> In a brief statement released by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was noted that the Ministers discussed the ongoing dialogue and regional developments and touched upon the issue of opening the border to Turkish and Armenian diplomatic passport holders and third country citizens within the framework of the normalization process.

In a joint press conference with the Georgian Minister of Foreign Affairs in Tbilisi on 3 July, following his visit to and meetings in Georgia, Mirzoyan stated that there was a healthy dialogue between Yerevan and Ankara on relations with Türkiye, that Armenia wanted to fully restore its relations with Türkiye, and that it was time to implement the agreements reached earlier.<sup>127</sup>

In an extensive interview with a magazine in early July, President Khachaturyan responded to questions about relations with regional countries and made the following statements about Türkiye:

“We have continuously pursued the normalisation of relations with Ankara. There have been some positive developments in this regard. Following the devastating earthquake in Turkey, Armenia was among the countries that provided humanitarian assistance, sending aid and rescue workers. Subsequently, Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan visited Ankara.

124 “President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia Talk Over Phone”, *Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications*, June 19, 2024, <https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/president-erdogan-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia-talk-over-phone>.

125 “Armenia says recognises State of Palestine”, *RFI*, June 21, 2024, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/middleeast/20240621-armenia-says-recognises-state-of-palestine?ysclid=m32zdr5u61271709>.

126 “Telephone Conversation between The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia And Türkiye”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia*, June 25, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/25/mirzoyan\\_fidan/12712](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/25/mirzoyan_fidan/12712).

127 “Statement by The Foreign Minister of Armenia for The Press Following the Meeting with The Foreign Minister of Georgia”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, July 3, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-conference/2024/07/03/fms\\_armenia\\_georgia/12729](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-conference/2024/07/03/fms_armenia_georgia/12729).

There have been multiple exchanges at the level of Foreign Ministers, as well as between the Prime Ministers and Presidents, and meetings between special representatives. We have agreed on some relatively small measures and are committed to improving relations.

However, we often feel that these relations are overtly dependent on our talks with Azerbaijan, which remains a significant obstacle.

From our side, we have made substantial efforts to demonstrate our commitment to normalising relations. Given that Turkey is our largest neighbor, normalising relations without preconditions is crucial.

We hope to have better opportunities now for establishing peace and accelerating this process, particularly in implementing agreements such as opening the borders for citizens of third countries, and ultimately, fully opening the borders.

Our common border, one of the few remaining closed borders from the Cold War era, has been shut since 1993, with brief openings on February 11st and 14th for earthquake relief delivery. However, it remains closed, reflecting a relic of the past that we hope to change.”

On 10 July, Armenian media reported that Türkiye’s Minister of Foreign Affairs H. Fidan, who attended the Shusha Summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) on behalf of the President of the Republic, expressed concern over the perceived unbalanced attitude of some Western countries in the efforts to improve Azerbaijan-Armenia relations.

When asked about President Erdoğan’s statement “just as we entered Karabakh and Libya” regarding Israeli aggression during a party meeting in Rize on 28 February, Pashinyan said on 31 August that he did not want to comment on this issue at a time when there is some positive, albeit slow progress in Armenian-Turkish relations, but that he could say the following in order not to appear to be avoiding the issue:

“We had said in the past officially too, during the 44-day war our military and intelligence saw Turkish flags, Turkish servicemen, Turkish commandos, high-ranking officers in multiple locations, and let’s not forget that the large-scale Azerbaijani-Turkish military exercises took place before the 44-day war, and Turkish F-16s and pilots were airborne during the entire war, they were serviced by Turkish personnel”<sup>128</sup>

---

128 “Prime Minister on Erdogan’s Statement Regarding Turkey’s Participation in 44-day War”, *Lurer*, August 31, 2024, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2024/08/31/Prime-Minister-on-Erdogan-s-statement-regarding-Turkey-s-participation-in-44-day-war/1180037>.

The Armenian Bar Association submitted a formal complaint with the US administration under the “Magnitsky Sanctions” against the SADAT (International Defense Consultancy Construction Industry and Trade Inc.) organization in Türkiye and its Chairman.<sup>129</sup>

In early August, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fidan’s interview<sup>130</sup> published in the *Sabah* newspaper, in which he stated that the border with Armenia could be opened if Azerbaijan and Armenia normalize their relations, was covered in the Armenian press.

The Special Representatives of Türkiye and Armenia held their fifth meeting on 30 July, for the first time without a third party, at the joint border crossing of Alishan-Margara. Below is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement regarding this meeting:

“On July 30, Special Representatives for the Normalization Process between Türkiye and Armenia, Ambassador Serdar Kılıç and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Armenia Ruben Rubinyan held their fifth meeting on the Alishan-Margara crossing on the border of the two countries.

They reconfirmed the agreements reached at their previous meetings.

Furthermore, they agreed to assess the technical requirements to enable functioning of Akyaka/Akhurik railroad border gate in line with the regional developments as well as to simplify their mutual visa procedures for diplomatic/official passport holders.

Finally, they reemphasized their agreement to continue the normalization process without any preconditions towards achieving the ultimate goal of full normalization between their respective countries”<sup>131</sup>

It was reported in the Armenian press that the 12<sup>th</sup> annual religious service was held at the Akdamar Church on 8 September, that the Armenian Patriarch of Istanbul presided over the service, and that many Armenians from Türkiye and abroad attended the service.<sup>132</sup>

129 “Armenian Bar Association Files Global Magnitsky Sanctions Complaint Against Turkey’s SADAT”, *Armenian Bar Association*, September 23, 2024, <https://armenianbar.org/2024/09/23/armenian-bar-association-files-global-magnitsky-sanctions-complaint-against-turkeys-sadat/>.

130 “Dışişleri Bakanı Fidan, Sabah’a Konuştu: İsrail, Maliyet Ödemeden Durmayacak”, *Sabah*, August 1, 2024, <https://www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/gundem/disisleri-bakani-fidan-sabaha-konustu-israil-maliyet-odemeden-durmayacak/20>.

131 “No: 152, 30 July 2024, Regarding the Fifth Meeting of the Special Representatives for the Normalization Process between Türkiye and Armenia”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye*, July 30, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-152\\_-turkiye-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcilerinin-besinci-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-152_-turkiye-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcilerinin-besinci-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa)

132 “The 12th Liturgy Was Held in the Armenian Holy Cross Church of Aghtamar Island, in Which the Delegation of Western Armenia also Participated”, *Western Armenia TV*, September 10, 2024, [https://westernarmeniatv.com/en/society\\_en/the-12th-liturgy-was-held-in-the-armenian-holy-cross-church-of-aghtamar-island-in-which-the-delegation-of-western-armenia-also-participated/](https://westernarmeniatv.com/en/society_en/the-12th-liturgy-was-held-in-the-armenian-holy-cross-church-of-aghtamar-island-in-which-the-delegation-of-western-armenia-also-participated/).

In an interview with a Greek Cypriot newspaper on 28 September, the Armenian Ambassador to Greece accredited to the Greek Administration of Southern Cyprus (GASC) stated that it is important to settle Armenia-Türkiye relations as part of the settlement of Armenia-Azerbaijan relations and that this would contribute to the establishment of a stable peace in the region.<sup>133</sup>

Speaking on 10 September at the “Yerevan Dialogue Forum”, Special Representative Rubinyan said:

“There is a misunderstanding about the state of Armenia-Turkey relations in the outside world. Many people think that the reason for the lack of normal diplomatic relations between the two countries is the historical problems, but this is not the case. Armenia has always been ready and is ready to have regular relations with Turkey, to establish diplomatic relations, to open the border. If our Turkish neighbors have political will, we can have regular relations even tomorrow.”<sup>134</sup>

Speaking at the same forum, former Grand National Assembly of Türkiye deputy G. Paylan argued that “The Turkish cities and settlements near the border of Turkey and Armenia are very poor. Therefore, these cities are waiting for the Armenian-Turkish border to open, because it would be beneficial for them.”<sup>135</sup> On 20 September, Rubinyan met with US Deputy Secretary of State J. Huck, accompanied by L. Bono and C. Prince, during their visit to Armenia. The statement said that regional security issues and the Armenia-Türkiye normalization process were discussed.<sup>136</sup>

In a speech on 23 September, Rubinyan stated that the EU Ambassadors accredited in Armenia conducted a fact-finding visit to the Armenia-Türkiye border, that a senior Armenian official briefed them on the border crossing works, that the border crossing was ready on the Armenian side, but that no steps had been taken by the Turkish side to implement the agreement reached. He added:

“The Armenian side is ready for open borders if Turkey shows political will.”<sup>137</sup> The reason for this is definitely not the lack of political will on

---

133 “Turkey’s Normalization of Relations with Armenia Will Contribute to Azerbaijan Acting More Constructively in Negotiations: Ambassador Mkrtchyan’s Interview with Financial Mirror”, *ArmenPress*, June 28, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1194704>.

134 “If Turkey Shows Political Will, We Can Have Normalized Relations Even Tomorrow: Rubinyan”, *Lurer*, September 10, 2024, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2024/09/10/If-Turkey-shows-political-will-we-can-have-normalized-relations-even-tomorrow-Rubinyan/1185210>.

135 “Garó Paylan Weighs in on Aliyev’s ‘Biggest Fear’ And Erdogan’s Deliberations Regarding Armenian Border Opening”, *ArmenPress*, September 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199587>.

136 “Ruben Rubinyan meets with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joshua Huck”, *Lurer*, September 20, 2024, <https://lurer.com/article/596455/en?ysclid=m330n7a4nn40087561>.

137 “EU Ambassadors Visit ‘Margará’ Checkpoint on Armenian-Turkish Border”, *Arka News Agency*, September 23, 2024, [https://arka.am/en/news/politics/eu\\_ambassadors\\_visit\\_margará\\_checkpoint\\_on\\_armenian\\_turkish\\_border/](https://arka.am/en/news/politics/eu_ambassadors_visit_margará_checkpoint_on_armenian_turkish_border/).

the Armenian side. The Armenian side has that political will, and we are ready to have established diplomatic relations tomorrow, to have open borders, and we hope that we will see a similar position and appropriate action from Turkey.”

It has once again been observed that the Special Envoy did not take into account the steps that the Turkish side has stated in the most authoritative terms which Armenia is expected to take for of peace and stability that he attempts to seek support for pressure against Türkiye from third parties.

Rubinyan reiterated these allegations with more accusatory statements on 12 October, saying, “The lack of political will in Ankara is preventing the normalization of relations.” Speaking at a conference in Yerevan, he stated:

“There is a misperception in Turkey that the Armenian Diaspora’s stance has been or remains an obstruction on the path of the Armenia-Turkey normalization. On numerous occasions it has been proven that that it is not the case. It wasn’t that way in the early 2010s, when the so-called football diplomacy was underway, when the protocols were signed. At that time the Armenian government was ready to immediately normalize relations with Turkey without preconditions. The only obstruction in the Armenia-Turkey normalization is the lack of political will in Turkey itself.”<sup>138</sup>

These were unfortunate statements coming from a special representative. It gives the impression that he is relying on distorted interpretations of facts and propaganda discourse. These statements undoubtedly reflect the eagerness to open the border with Türkiye as soon as possible in the troubled situation in Iran and Georgia.

Rubinyan, in his statement on the same issue published in the press on 27 October, used more moderate language, stating that all preparations on their side of the border had been completed, that he could not speak about the reason for Türkiye’s inaction, that although the normalization process with Türkiye was linked to the Armenia-Azerbaijan peace negotiations, it was being carried out through two separate diplomatic channels, and that the progress to be achieved with Türkiye could make a great contribution to the peace process with Azerbaijan.

138 “Ankara’s Lack of Political Will Obstructing Armenia-Turkey Normalization, Yerevan Says”, *Asbarez*, October 12, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/ankaras-lack-of-political-will-obstructing-armenia-turkey-normalization-yerevan-says/>.

Speaking at the Baku Security Conference held on September 14-15, İbrahim Kalın, Chief of the National Intelligence Organization, emphasized that a lasting peace in the region would contribute to the opening of the Zangezur Corridor, which would provide a direct transport link along the Azerbaijan-Armenia-Nakhichevan-Türkiye-Europe route.<sup>139</sup>

In a speech on 18 September, Pashinyan stated that Armenia should establish diplomatic relations with Türkiye and open the border:

“If I were to put myself in the role of an observer following the discussions in Türkiye, I wouldn’t say that there’ve been very big changes in perceptions, but there have been changes in some perceptions in Türkiye, it is obvious. And I can’t underestimate the discussions and negotiations taking place between the special representatives of Armenia and Türkiye, which don’t have big results practically but it is very important that the two countries are communicating. And the things that were being discussed through public statements in the past, now we have the opportunity to discuss, clarify and receive clarifications also through diplomatic channels.”<sup>140</sup>

On 24 September, President Erdoğan, who was in the US for the UN General Assembly, met with Pashinyan, who was also in the US to attend the UN General Assembly, at the Turkish House in New York.<sup>141</sup> According to the information provided by Armenia on the meeting, the two leaders reviewed in detail the agreements reached between Ankara and Yerevan since 2022 and agreed to create a new impetus to the normalization process. Pashinyan informed President Erdoğan regarding the current situation in the Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiation process and said that Azerbaijan had rejected his several proposals to sign a partial peace agreement. In an English statement issued by the Presidency, it was stated that significant progress has been made towards an unconditional normalization between Türkiye and Armenia, that President Erdoğan expressed sincere support for the continuation of the dialogue process, and that the President emphasized that Ankara supports the establishment of a lasting peace between Azerbaijan and Armenia and lasting neighborliness between the two countries in the coming period. In his speech at the UN General Assembly, President Erdoğan also stated that the developments in the

139 Tuğba Altun, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Crucial for Caucasus Stability, Says Turkish Intelligence Chief”, *Anadolu Agency*, September 17, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/armenia-azerbaijan-peace-crucial-for-caucasus-stability-says-turkish-intelligence-chief/3332315>.

140 “Armenia PM: Not Big but Certain Change of Perceptions Taking Place in Turkey”, *News.am*, September 18, 2024, [https://news.am/eng/news/843027.html#google\\_vignette](https://news.am/eng/news/843027.html#google_vignette).

141 “President Erdoğan Meets with PM Pashinyan of Armenia”, *Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye*, September 24, 2024, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/153707/president-erdogan-meets-with-pm-pashinyan-of-armenia>.



Azerbaijan-Armenia peace process would have a positive impact on the Türkiye-Armenia normalization process.<sup>142</sup>

The anti-Pashinyan opposition in Armenia and their supporters in the Diaspora heavily criticized Pashinyan's visit to the Turkish House and his posing with the President's book.

In a statement to *Anadolu Agency* on 30 September, Armenian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Vahan Kostanyan expressed Armenia's satisfaction with the "positive dynamics" in the normalization process with Türkiye following the two leaders' meeting in New York. He reiterated Armenia's readiness for "full normalization" of relations, and said that the opening of the Kars-Gyumri railway could be a new gateway for Armenia to Europe and for Türkiye to Central Asia and China.<sup>143</sup>

Asked by a member of the parliament what measures the government is taking in a situation where Iran is drawn into a war in the Middle East and Georgia's relations with the West are deteriorating, Pashinyan replied on 2 October that the Armenian government has a balanced approach in its foreign policy. For example, its participation in the 3+3 Platform was initially criticized, but it was the right decision and fits into the logic of regional cooperation. He further noted that the Armenia-Iran neighbor relations are natural, not a political choice, and stem from the natural ties between the two neighboring states, the same can be said about the relations with Georgia, and that currently Armenia's efforts are focused on improving its relations with Türkiye and Azerbaijan, and that the only goal of all these efforts is to ensure the security of the country.<sup>144</sup> He concluded his remarks by saying "Throughout our history of independence, we have placed all our hopes for the security of the state on the soldier. However, this approach is wrong, it does not happen. The only guarantee of the security of our state is peace and the presence of normal relations with neighbors, there are simply no other guarantees."

In an interview with the press on 12 October in Turkmenistan, where he was attending an international forum, Armenian President Khachaturian focused on Türkiye-Armenia relations, stating that both countries share the same perception that a new phase in relations is developing with the normalization process. Khachaturian noted with satisfaction that he had a brief meeting with

142 "'Gazze'de Sadece Çocuklar Değil, Aynı Zamanda Birleşmiş Milletler Sistemi Ölüyor'", *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı*, September 24, 2024, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/153686/-gazze-de-sadece-cocuklar-degil-ayni-zamanda-birlesmis-milletler-sistemi-oluyor->

143 Rabia İclal Turan, "Armenia Ready for 'Full Normalization' with Türkiye, Welcomes 'Positive Dynamics'", *Anadolu Agency*, September 28, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/armenia-ready-for-full-normalization-with-turkiye-welcomes-positive-dynamics-/3344531#>.

144 Siranush Ghazanchyan, "Armenia's Foreign Policy 'on The Right Track' – PM", *Public Radio of Armenia*, October 2, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/02/armenias-foreign-policy-on-the-right-track-pm/>.



the Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly who attended the meeting and that they discussed common issues such as peaceful coexistence, the opening of borders and the establishment of diplomatic relations, and that the aspirations and perceptions of both sides were the same. Khachaturian also emphasized the importance and urgency of opening the borders of the two countries to third country citizens and holders of diplomatic passports, and reiterated the known position on the opening of transport routes with Azerbaijan within the framework of the “Crossroads of Peace” project.<sup>145</sup>

The Speaker of the Turkish Grand National Assembly met with his Armenian counterpart in Geneva on 14 October and emphasized the importance Ankara attributes to the corridor linking Azerbaijan to Nakhchivan and Türkiye via Armenia.<sup>146</sup>

The Armenian Minister of Territorial Administration and Infrastructure, who attended the International Road Federation World Congress in Istanbul, held a bilateral meeting with the Turkish Minister of Transport and Infrastructure on 15 October.<sup>147</sup> The Armenian press gave wide coverage to this meeting, stating that although the content of the meeting was not disclosed, it was important that the two ministers met.

In a brief statement released by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 17 October, it was announced that the third meeting of the 3+3 South Caucasus Regional Cooperation Platform will be held in Istanbul on 18 October, and that the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran and Russia will participate in the meeting hosted by the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In his opening speech on 18 October, Minister of Foreign Affairs Fidan stated that the third meeting of the South Caucasus Regional Cooperation Platform was based on regional ownership, that the countries of the region were in the best position to solve the problems they faced, and that the main purpose of the platform was to meet the need for a forum where all issues of concern to the South Caucasus could be discussed. Minister Fidan added that at the end of the meeting, they envisioned the publication of a joint statement reflecting Türkiye’s vision and covering the main issues discussed at the meeting.<sup>148</sup>

145 “Armenia-Türkiye Normalization Could Become Reality in Foreseeable Future, Says President Khachaturyan”, *ArmenPress*, October 12, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202129>.

146 Astghik Bedevian, “Turkey Insists on Azeri Corridor Through Armenia”, *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, October 15, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33159524.html>.

147 Aline Grigoryan, “Armenia’s Minister of Territorial Administration Meets With Turkish Minister of Transport and Infrastructure”, *Finport*, October 16, 2024, [https://finport.am/full\\_news.php?id=51388&lang=3&ysclid=m3318981he60903565](https://finport.am/full_news.php?id=51388&lang=3&ysclid=m3318981he60903565).

148 Muhammet Tarhan, Sümeyye Dilara Dinçer, “Bakan Fidan: Güney Kafkasya’ya Bakışımızın Temelinde Bölgesel Sahiplenme Anlayışımız Bulunmakta”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, October 18, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/bakan-fidan-guney-kafkasyaya-bakisimizin-temelinde-bolgesel-sahiplenme-anlayisimiz-bulunmakta/3366083>.

Following the conclusion of the meeting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued the following statement on 18 October:

H.E. Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, hosted the third meeting of the 3+3 Regional Cooperation Platform, held in İstanbul on 18 October 2024.

The Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Iran, and the Russian Federation participated in the meeting.

The primary objective of this platform is to enhance multilateral cooperation in the South Caucasus, based on mutual benefit and guided by the principle of regional ownership.

The meeting addressed matters regarding the establishment of lasting peace and stability, as well as regional development in the South Caucasus. An exchange of views was held on deepening regional cooperation through concrete projects.

A Joint Declaration was adopted at the end of the meeting.

The Joint Declaration emphasized the contributions of regional economic cooperation to confidence building between countries, as well as to prosperity and stability. It was agreed to explore cooperation opportunities in the fields of transport, communication, trade, energy, investment, and connectivity.

The Declaration also underscored the importance of promoting peace and stability in the region through dialogue.

Following the meeting, the Ministers were received by President Erdoğan.

Türkiye will continue to collaborate with the countries of the region to promote lasting peace and strengthen cooperation in the South Caucasus.<sup>149</sup>

Below is the text of the joint statement issued at the end of the meeting:

---

149 “No: 216, 18 October 2024, Regarding the Third Meeting of the 3+3 Regional Cooperation Platform in İstanbul”, *Ministry Of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Of Türkiye*, October 18, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-216\\_-istanbul-da-duzenlenen-3-3-guney-kafkasya-bolgesel-isbirligi-platformunun-ucuncu-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-216_-istanbul-da-duzenlenen-3-3-guney-kafkasya-bolgesel-isbirligi-platformunun-ucuncu-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa)

In the Meeting, the Ministers:

- 1- Recalled the previous meetings of the 3+3 format held in Moscow and Tehran.
- 2- Emphasized the significance of reconvening the 3+3 Regional Cooperation Platform amidst the current complex developments that endanger regional and international peace and stability and agreed to further enhance cooperation within the 3+3 format.
- 3- In light of the crucial necessity for having good neighborly relations that stem from joint endeavors to realize mutual interests, reaffirmed the importance of the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for sovereignty, political independence, territorial integrity, inviolability of internationally recognized borders, non-interference in internal affairs, prohibition of the threat or use of force and respect for human rights, based on all the principles of the United Nations Charter.
- 4- In line with the primary role of the Regional Countries and highlighting the importance of dialogue, seizing regional cooperation opportunities, and the ability to frankly converse on prominent international issues, discussed the outstanding issues that concern the region.
- 5- Commended the positive dynamics in normalization and development of relations between all the countries of the region.
- 6- Stating the constructive role regional economic cooperation plays in regional confidence building, prosperity, and stability, which in turn benefits all the peoples of the region by providing economic and commercial development opportunities by transforming conflictual topics; agreed to further explore opportunities of cooperation in the fields of transport, communication, trade, energy, investment and connectivity.
- 7- Underscored the importance of cultural cooperation and people-to-people contacts with a view to encouraging joint projects in education, science, tourism, culture, and sports.
- 8- Concurred that bilateral talks will complement multilateral consultations towards sustainable regional peace and economic development.
- 9- Reiterated that the doors of the 3+3 Platform will always be open for Georgia to join.

- 10- Exchanged views on the escalating situation in the Middle East and strongly condemned grave breaches of the principles of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law that could jeopardize regional peace and security, and urged for respect for international law, end to all aggressions and atrocities through immediate ceasefire, and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance for those affected.
- 11- Acknowledging the increase in terrorist and criminal activity in areas close to our region, expressed their commitment to cooperate against all forms and manifestations of terrorism in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.
- 12- Underlined the importance of the regular ministerial meetings of the “3+3” Regional Cooperation Platform, as well as consultations in the areas of common interest towards enhancing and solidifying an environment of trust and cooperation in the region.
- 13- Agreed that the venue and the date of the next meeting will be agreed through diplomatic channels.

The Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Russian Federation thanked the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye for the good reception and successful holding of this meeting.”<sup>150</sup>

The Ministers participating in the meeting were also received by President Erdoğan.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for bilateral meetings between the participating ministers. In a brief statement released by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the 55-minute meeting of the Azerbaijani-Armenian Foreign Ministers, the parties “agreed to continue their efforts to finalize and conclude the agreement in the shortest possible period.”<sup>151</sup>

The statement issued by the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the meeting of the Turkish-Armenian Foreign Ministers indicated that the parties

150 “The Third Meeting of the “3+3” Regional Cooperation Platform Joint Communiqué, 18 October 2024”, *Ministry Of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Of Türkiye*, October 18, 2024, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-third-meeting-of-the-3-3-regional-cooperation-platform-joint-communique-18-october-2024.en.mfa>

151 “Azerbaijani and Armenian Foreign Ministers Agreed to Continue Negotiations on Peace Agreement”, *Azertag*, October 18, 2024, [https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbaijani\\_and\\_armenian\\_foreign\\_ministers\\_agreed\\_to\\_continue\\_negotiations\\_on\\_peace\\_agreement-3236218](https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbaijani_and_armenian_foreign_ministers_agreed_to_continue_negotiations_on_peace_agreement-3236218).

discussed the issues on the bilateral agenda and the ongoing Armenia-Türkiye dialogue with the goal of fully normalizing the relations, and that Mirzoyan confirmed the importance of implementing the agreements reached in this process.<sup>152</sup> Mirzoyan, in his speech earlier in the meeting, also expressed his satisfaction with the completion of the border crossing works on his side and the developments on the Gyumri-Kars railway.

Mirzoyan also held a bilateral meeting with the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, the principled approach of opening regional economic and transportation links within the framework of respect for sovereignty and authority was reaffirmed.<sup>153</sup>

“We have proposed to our Turkish and Iranian colleagues that Yerevan and Baku use the 3+3 platform to complete the work on a peace treaty,” the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs told the press. Answering a question on the issue in the Parliament on 23 October, Mirzoyan explained: “There is no proposal on the table to use the 3+3 format as a platform for Armenia-Azerbaijan negotiations. Even if such a proposal existed, Armenia does not consider it appropriate.”<sup>154</sup>

Regarding the attack on Turkish Aerospace Industries headquarters in Ankara, the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on 23 October that Armenia opposes all forms of terrorism and such violent acts.<sup>155</sup>

During the discussions of the 2025 budget in the parliament, on 31 October, FM Mirzoyan said, in response to a question, “International recognition of the Armenian genocide is not our number one priority. Studying the tragic holes in history, the Armenian genocide, or making it the number one priority is certainly not in the agenda of the Foreign Ministry”.<sup>156</sup>

Armenian media reflected on the 6 November statement of FM H. Fidan that Türkiye’s relations with Armenia would only improve after the signing of a

152 “The Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Türkiye”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia*, October 18, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/18/Mirzoyan\\_Fidan/12898](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/18/Mirzoyan_Fidan/12898).

153 “Armenia, Iran FMs Meet in Istanbul on Sidelines of 3+3 Platform”, *News.am*, October 18, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/848001.html>.

154 Nigar Abbasova, “Lavrov: Russia, Türkiye, Iran Offered Baku, Yerevan to Use 3+3 Platform to Complete Work on Peace Treaty”, *Report News Agency*, October 18, 2024, <https://report.az/en/foreignpolitics/lavrov-russia-turkiye-iran-offered-baku-yerevan-to-use-3-3-platform-to-complete-work-on-peace-treaty/?ysclid=m331kkym55869640423>.

155 “Armenian Foreign Ministry Condemns Armed Attack in Ankara”, *ArmenPress*, October 23, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203065>.

156 “International Recognition of Armenian Genocide Not Number One Priority of the Government: FM,” Public Radio of Armenia, last modified October 31, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/31/international-recognition-of-armenian-genocide-not-number-one-priority-of-the-government-fm/>.

treaty between Armenia and Azerbaijan as a shift from the commitment to hold talks without preconditions. In this context, President Erdogan's statement at the 11th summit of the Organization of Turkic States: "we hope and want that Azerbaijan's historic achievements, which were realized by the lives of martyrs, to be underscored around the negotiations table through the signing of the peace treaty" was quoted.<sup>157</sup>

At an interview with an Azerbaijani TV channel on 25 November, PM Pashinian called for stronger ties with Türkiye, emphasizing that improving relations with neighboring countries was crucial for Armenia's stability, independence and economic development.<sup>158</sup>

---

157 "South Caucasus Opens Doors to Peace - Turkish President," Trend News Agency, last modified November 6, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3965919.html>.

158 "FM Fidan, Aliyev Discuss Türkiye, Azerbaijan's Relations with Armenia," Daily Sabah, last modified July 5, 2024, <https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/fm-fidan-aliyev-discuss-turkiye-azerbajjans-relations-with-armenia>.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY:

“Ruben Rubinyan meets with U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joshua Huck”, Lurer, September 20, 2024,  
<https://lurer.com/article/596455/en?ysclid=m330n7a4nn40087561>.

“Russia Insists On Key Role In Armenian-Azeri Transport Links”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, October 9, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33152459.html>.

“Russian Envoy to Armenia Summoned to Moscow for Consultations — Foreign Ministry”, TASS, May 24, 2024, <https://tass.com/politics/1792949>.

“The Congratulatory Message of President Vahagn Khachaturyan on The Adoption of The Declaration of Independence of Armenia”, The President of the Republic of Armenia, August 23, 2024,  
<https://www.president.am/en/statements-and-messages/item/2024/08/23/President-VahagnKhachaturyan/>.

“Vice President Kamala Harris Commemorates Armenian Independence Day”, The Armenian Weekly, September 24 2024,  
<https://armenianweekly.com/2024/09/24/vice-president-kamala-harris-commemorates-armenian-independence-day/>.

2023 Թվականի Դեկտեմբերի 25-ին Սանկտ Պետերբուրգում Ստորագրված «Եվրասիական Տնտեսական Միության Եվ Դրա Անդամ Պետությունների՝ Մի Կողմից, Եվ Իրանի Իսլամական Հանրապետության՝ Մյուս Կողմից, Միջեկ Ազատ Առեվտրի Մասին Համաձայնագրում Ամրագրված Պարտավորությունների՝ Սահմանադրությանը Համապատասխանության Հարցը Որոշելու Վերաբերյալ Գործով», Հայաստանի Հանրապետության Սահմանադրական Դատարան, 27

“946,162 Foreign Tourists Visited Armenia in First Half of 2024”, MassisPost, August 7, 2024, <https://massispost.com/2024/08/946162-foreign-tourists-visited-armenia-in-first-half-of-2024/>.

“A Joint Armenian-Russian Contract Has Been Signed”, Armenian Nuclear Power Plant, December 15, 2023,  
<https://armeniannpp.am/en/info/noroutyouanner/storagrvel-e-hay-rousakan-hamatex-paymanagir.html>.

Adlet Seilkhanov , “Armenian President Vahagn Khachaturyan to Pay Official Visit to Kazakhstan”, “Kazinform” International News Agency, October 12, 2024, <https://en.inform.kz/news/armenian-presidentvahagn-khachaturyan-to-pay-official-visit-to-kazakhstan-9f2ef9/>.



“After Stern Criticism from Russia, Armenia Amends History Textbook”, Asbarez, August 16, 2024, <https://www.asbarez.com/after-stern-criticism-from-russia-armenia-amends-history-textbook/>.

“Agreement on Mutual Assistance of Customs Authorities Signed Between Armenia and The USA”, ArmenPress, June 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1139307>.

“Alex Manoukian, “Kamala Harris: A Disappointing Partner for the Armenian Community”, The Armenian Weekly, August 27, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/08/27/kamala-harris-adisappointing-partner-for-the-armenian-community/>.

“Ali Gasimov, “President Joe Biden Sends Letter to President İlham Aliyev”, Trend News Agency, October 21, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3959437.html>.

Aline Grigoryan, “Armenia’s Minister of Territorial Administration Meets With Turkish Minister of Transport and Infrastructure”, Finport, October 16, 2024, [https://finport.am/full\\_news.php?id=51388&lang=3&ysclid=m3318981he60903565](https://finport.am/full_news.php?id=51388&lang=3&ysclid=m3318981he60903565).

Ani Avetisyan, “Armenia Recalls Ambassador from Belarus Amid Rising Tension with Russia”, Eurasianet, June 14, 2024, <https://eurasianet.org/armenia-recalls-ambassador-from-belarus-amidrising-tension-with-russia>.

“Ankara’s Lack of Political Will Obstructing Armenia-Turkey Normalization, Yerevan Says”, Asbarez, October 12, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/ankaras-lack-of-political-will-obstructing-armenia-turkey-normalization-yerevan-says/>.

“ARF Western U.S.A. 58th Regional Convention Statement”, Asbarez, July 2, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/arf-western-u-s-a-58th-regional-convention-statement/>.

“Armenia Becomes Largest Importer of Weapons from India”, MassisPost, July 24, 2024, <https://massispost.com/2024/07/armenia-becomes-largest-importer-of-weapons-from-india/>.

“Armenia Condemns Fresh ‘Azerbaijani Aggression’ Against Karabakh”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, September 19, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32599494.html>.

Armenia Could Act As Bridge Connecting Iran with Europe And Eurasia to Expand Iran's Trade in the Region", Tabnak, October 2, 2024, [https://www.tabnak.ir/en/news/5188/%C2%A0-armeniairan%E2%80%99s-gateway-to-eurasia-tehran-yerevan-seek-expanding-bilateral-trade-to-us\\$-3-bln-%C2%A0%C2%A0](https://www.tabnak.ir/en/news/5188/%C2%A0-armeniairan%E2%80%99s-gateway-to-eurasia-tehran-yerevan-seek-expanding-bilateral-trade-to-us$-3-bln-%C2%A0%C2%A0)

"Armenia Didn't Join Two Statements at CIS Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting", ArmenPress, October 7, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201731>.

"Armenia Faces 48% Drop in Remittances, Heavily Reliant on Russia and US", Caucasus Watch, September 4, 2024, <https://caucasuswatch.de/en/news/armenia-faces-48-drop-in-remittances-heavily-relianton-russia-and-us.html>.

"Armenia Hosts EEU Prime Ministerial Meeting", ArmenPress, October 1, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201110>.

"Armenia Never Agreed to the Involvement of Third Countries in Ensuring the Security of Communications - PM", ArmenPress, October 8, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201804>.

"Armenia PM: Not Big but Certain Change of Perceptions Taking Place in Turkey", News.am, September 18, 2024, [https://news.am/eng/news/843027.html#google\\_vignette](https://news.am/eng/news/843027.html#google_vignette).

"Armenia Proposes Joint Investigations of Ceasefire Violations; Azerbaijan Unlikely to Accept", The Armenian Report, June 24, 2024, <https://www.thearmenianreport.com/post/armenia-proposes-jointinvestigations-of-ceasefire-violations-azerbaijan-unlikely-to-accept>.

"Armenia says recognises State of Palestine", RFI, June 21, 2024, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/middleeast/20240621-armenia-says-recognises-state-of-palestine?ysclid=m32zdr5u61271709>.

"Armenia Skips CSTO Defense Ministers' Meeting in Almaty", ArmenPress, May 31, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1138417>.

"Armenia Skips CSTO Drills In Kazakhstan", Azatutyun Radiokayan, September 26, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32053026.html>.

"Armenia to Boost Defense Spending by 20% in 2025", Report News Agency, October 28, 2024, <https://report.az/en/region/armenia-to-boost-defense-spending-by-20-in-2025/>.

“Armenia to Participate in CIS Informal Summit”, ArmenPress, September 4, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199014>.

“Armenia, Iran FMs Meet in Istanbul on Sidelines of 3+3 Platform”, News.am, October 18, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/848001.html>.

“Armenia’s Decision to Freeze Participation in CSTO Sufficient for Now, PM Pashinyan Says”, APA, August 31, 2024, <https://en.apa.az/cis-countries/armenias-decision-to-freeze-participation-in-cstosufficient-for-now-pm-pashinyan-says-446794>.

Armenia’s Foreign Minister Says Azerbaijan Lacks “Political Will” to Sign Peace Deal, Warns of Possible Military Action”, Zartong, October 2, 2024, <https://zartongmedia.com/2024/10/02/armeniasforeign-minister-says-azerbaijan-lacks-political-will-to-sign-peace-deal-warns-of-possible-military-action/>.

“Armenia’s Trade Statistics for H1 2024: Export and Import Growth”, Arka News Agency, September 2, 2024, [https://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia\\_s\\_trade\\_statistics\\_for\\_h1\\_2024\\_export\\_and\\_import\\_growth/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Ministry%20of,included%20gold%20\(%244.12%20billion%2C%20a](https://arka.am/en/news/economy/armenia_s_trade_statistics_for_h1_2024_export_and_import_growth/#:~:text=According%20to%20the%20Ministry%20of,included%20gold%20(%244.12%20billion%2C%20a)

“Armenian Bar Association Files Global Magnitsky Sanctions Complaint Against Turkey’s SADAT”, Armenian Bar Association, September 23, 2024, <https://armenianbar.org/2024/09/23/armenian-bar-association-files-global-magnitsky-sanctions-complaint-against-turkeys-sadat/>.

“Armenian Defense Minister Visits China”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, September 12, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33117715.html>.

Armenian Foreign Minister Expressed His Hope for A Strong Partnership with The New NATO Secretary General”, ARKA News Agency, October 10, 2024, [https://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenian\\_foreign\\_minister\\_expressed\\_his\\_hope\\_for\\_a\\_strong\\_partnership\\_with\\_the\\_new\\_nato\\_secretary\\_ge/](https://arka.am/en/news/politics/armenian_foreign_minister_expressed_his_hope_for_a_strong_partnership_with_the_new_nato_secretary_ge/)

“Armenian Foreign Minister Takes Part in an Official Reception in Washington”, ArmenPress, July 10, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1195405>.

“Armenian Foreign Ministry Condemns Armed Attack in Ankara”, ArmenPress, October 23, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203065>.

“Armenian Parliament Approves Regulations of Commissions on Border Delimitation with Azerbaijan”, Caliber, October 21, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/armenian-parliament-approves-regulations-of-commissions-on-border-delimitation-with-azerbaijan?ysclid=m32pxrrqiz504881186>.

“Armenian Parliament Speaker Receives Secretary General of Black Sea Economic Cooperation”, ArmenPress, July 1, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1194838>.

“Armenia-Russia-Azerbaijan Trilateral Meeting Not Planned, Says Kremlin”, ArmenPress, October 8, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201765>.

“Armenia’s Premier Not to Participate in CSTO Summit in Astana,” ArmInfo, last modified November 27, 2024, [https://arminfo.info/full\\_news.php?id=87400&lang=3](https://arminfo.info/full_news.php?id=87400&lang=3).

“Armenia-Türkiye Normalization Could Become Reality in Foreseeable Future, Says President Khachaturyan”, ArmenPress, October 12, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202129>.

Armenia-U.S. Joint Exercise “EAGLE PARTNER 2024” Will Be Held in Armenia, ArmenPress, July 6, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1195178>.

Arshaluis Mgdesyan, Birth Rate in Armenia Drops by 7.6%, Mortality Rises by 6.3% in First Seven Months of 2024, The California Courier, September 6, 2024, <https://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/birthrate-in-armenia-drops-by-7-6-mortality-rises-by-6-3-in-first-seven-months-of-2024/>.

Arshaluys Barseghyan, “Armenia extends protection status for Nagorno-Karabakh Armenians”, OC Media, October 18, 2024, <https://oc-media.org/armenia-extends-protection-status-for-nagorno-karabakharmenians/>.

“Assistant Secretary O’Brien’s Travel to Armenia”, U.S. Department of State, June 7, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/assistant-secretary-obriens-travel-to-armenia/>.

“Astghik Bedevian, “Turkey Insists on Azeri Corridor Through Armenia”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, October 15, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33159524.html>.

“Azerbaijani and Armenian Foreign Ministers Agreed to Continue Negotiations on Peace Agreement”, Azertag, October 18, 2024,

[https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbaijani\\_and\\_armenian\\_foreign\\_ministers\\_agreed\\_to\\_continue\\_negotiations\\_on\\_peace\\_agreement-3236218](https://azertag.az/en/xeber/azerbaijani_and_armenian_foreign_ministers_agreed_to_continue_negotiations_on_peace_agreement-3236218).

“Azerbaijani FM Comments on Armenia’s Non-Participation in COP29,” Trend News Agency, last modified November 12, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3968699.html>.

“Biden Sends Letter to Pashinyan, Encouraging Finalization of Peace Agreement with Azerbaijan This Year”, ArmenPress, October 22, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202956>.

“Bilateral Defence Consultations Between Armenia and Germany Held in Berlin”, ArmenPress, October 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202082>.

Burç Eruygur, “Azerbaijani President, Armenian Premier Meet on Sidelines of BRICS Summit”, Anadolu Agency, October 24, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/azerbaijani-president-armenianpremier-meet-on-sidelines-of-brics-summit/3373258>.

Büşranur Koca-Can Efesoy, “Armenia Proposes Peace Treaty to Azerbaijan that Already Has 13 Of 17 Agreed-Upon Articles”, Anadolu Agency, September 1, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/armeniaproposes-peace-treaty-to-azerbaijan-that-already-has-13-of-17-agreed-upon-articles/3318171>.

Catherine Putz, “Commonwealth of Independent States Gathers in Moscow for Annual Heads of State Meeting”, The Diplomat, October 9, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/10/commonwealth-of-independent-states-gathers-in-moscow-for-annual-heads-of-state-meeting/>.

Catherine Putz, “Commonwealth of Independent States Gathers in Moscow for Annual Heads of State Meeting”, The Diplomat, October 9, 2024, <https://thediplomat.com/2024/10/commonwealth-of-independent-states-gathers-in-moscow-for-annual-heads-of-state-meeting/>.

“Chief of Armenian Armed Forces General Staff meets with France’s Chief of Army Staff”, ArmenPress, June 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1139319>.

“Constitutional Reforms Referendum Planned for 2027”, ArmenPress, August 29, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1198566>.

“Cumhurbaşkanı Erdoğan, Efes-2024 Tatbikatı’nın Seçkin Gözlemci Gününde Konuştu”, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı İletişim Başkanlığı,

May 30, 2024,

<https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/turkce/haberler/detay/cumhurbaskani-erdogan-efes-2024-tatbikatinin-seckin-gozlemci-gununde-konustu>.

“Dışışleri Bakanı Fidan, Sabah’a Konuştu: İsrail, Maliyet Ödemeden Durmayacak”, Sabah, August 1, 2024,  
<https://www.sabah.com.tr/galeri/gundem/disisleri-bakani-fidan-sabaha-konustu-israil-maliyet-odemedenden-durmayacak/20>.

“Director of The Russian FSB: The West is Putting Pressure on Armenia, Forcing it to Leave The CSTO”, TopWar, October 4, 2024,  
<https://en.topwar.ru/251343-direktor-fsb-zapad-okazyvaet-davlenie-naarmeniju-prinuzhdaja-ee-vyjti-iz-odkb.html>.

Elchin Mehdiyev, “Azerbaijan Provides Opportunity for Armenian Population of Karabakh to Return to Their Homes - Official”, Trend News Agency, October 16, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3957795.html>.

Elsa Court, “Moscow Issues Protest Note to Yerevan after Armenian Delegation Visits Bucha”, The Kyiv Independent, June 9, 2024,  
<https://kyivindependent.com/moscow-issues-protest-note-toyerevan-after-armenian-delegation-visits-bucha/>.

EU Ambassadors Visit “Margara” Checkpoint on Armenian-Turkish Border”, Arka News Agency, September 23, 2024,  
[https://arka.am/en/news/politics/eu\\_ambassadors\\_visit\\_margara\\_checkpoint\\_on\\_armenian\\_turkish\\_border/](https://arka.am/en/news/politics/eu_ambassadors_visit_margara_checkpoint_on_armenian_turkish_border/).

“Exclusive: EU Slams ‘Nonsense’ Comments by Russian FSB Chief about Armenia”, ArmenPress, October 4, 2024,  
<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201510>.

Eylül 2024, [https://www.concourt.am/decision/decisions/66f6b93924413\\_sdv-1750.pdf](https://www.concourt.am/decision/decisions/66f6b93924413_sdv-1750.pdf).

Fatima Latifova, “Armenian Education Ministry Rewriting History: Claim Filed against Russia”, AzerNews, August 16, 2024,  
<https://www.azernews.az/nation/229956.html>.

“FM Fidan, Aliyev Discuss Türkiye, Azerbaijan’s Relations with Armenia,” Daily Sabah, last modified July 5, 2024,  
<https://www.dailysabah.com/politics/diplomacy/fm-fidan-aliyev-discuss-turkiye-azerbajjans-relations-with-armenia>.

“For the First Time Flights to be Operated from Yerevan to China’s Urumqi City”, ArmenPress, July 10, 2024,  
<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1195404>.

“Former Nagorno-Karabakh Official Sentenced to 18 Years in Jail for Espionage,” Public Radio of Armenia, last modified November 22, 2024,  
<https://en.armradio.am/2024/11/22/former-nagorno-karabakh-official-sentenced-to-18-years-in-jail-for-espionage/>.

“France Hails Deal To Provide Armenia with Howitzers As ‘New Important Milestone’”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, June 18, 2024,  
<https://www.rferl.org/a/armenia-france-defense-russia-azerbaijan-howitzer/32997862.html>.

“France’s Macron Deplores ‘Azeri Pressure on Armenia’”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, September 26, 2024,  
<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33136150.html>.

“French President Reaffirms Unconditional Support to Armenia During Meeting with Pashinyan”, ArmenPress, October 3, 2024,  
<https://armenpress.am/en/article/1201440>.

“Galuzin: Russia Extremely Regrets Armenia’s Participation in Nato Summit in Washington”, News.am, July 11, 2024,  
<https://news.am/eng/news/833511.html>.

“Garo Paylan Weighs in on Aliyev’s ‘Biggest Fear’ And Erdogan’s Deliberations Regarding Armenian Border Opening”, ArmenPress, September 11, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199587>.

Gayane Saribekian, “Armenian Justice Minister Resigns Under Ruling Party Pressure”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, October 1, 2024,  
<https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33142106.html>.

Gazze’de Sadece Çocuklar Değil, Aynı Zamanda Birleşmiş Milletler Sistemi Ölüyor”, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Cumhurbaşkanlığı, September 24, 2024,  
<https://www.tccb.gov.tr/haberler/410/153686/-gazze-de-sadece-cocuklar-degil-ayni-zamanda-birlesmis-milletler-sistemi-oluyor->

Government Approves Strategy for Improving the Demographic Situation”, ArmenPress, October 17, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202496>.

“Head Of EU Delegation to RA: We Will Unlock The Full Potential of Armenia-EU Relations”, News.am, October 12, 2024,  
<https://news.am/eng/news/847010.html>.



Hoory Minoryan, “Armenia’s National Assembly Ratifies Border Delimitation Bill”, *The Armenian Weekly*, October 23, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/10/23/armenias-national-assembly-ratifiesborder-delimitation-bill/#:~:text=YEREVAN%E2%80%94The%20National%20Assembly%20of%20the,favor%20and%20no%20dissenting%20votes.>

Hoory Minoyan, “Armenian Prime Minister Criticizes Opposition as National Debates Intensify”, *The Armenian Weekly*, June 25, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/06/25/armenian-prime-ministercriticizes-opposition-as-national-debates-intensify/>.

Hoory Minoyan, “Pashinyan’s Remarks At Global Summit Question Armenian Patriotism”, *The Armenian Weekly*, September 18, 2024, <https://armenianweekly.com/2024/09/18/pashinyans-remarks-atglobal-summit-question-armenian-patriotism/#:~:text=YEREVAN%E2%80%94DURING%20the%20Second%20Armenian%20Global,superficial%20concept%20lacking%20true%20sovereignty.>

“‘If Borders Were Restored to The 1920 Map, The Zangezur Corridor Wouldn’t Be Needed.’ Comment from Baku”, *JamNews*, August 16, 2024, <https://jam-news.net/zangezur-removed-from-the-peace-agreement/>.

“If Turkey Shows Political Will, We Can Have Normalized Relations Even Tomorrow: Rubinyan”, *Lurer*, September 10, 2024, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2024/09/10/If-Turkey-shows-political-will-we-can-have-normalized-relations-even-tomorrow-Rubinyan/1185210.>

International Recognition of Armenian Genocide Not Number One Priority of the Government: FM,” *Public Radio of Armenia*, last modified October 31, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/31/international-recognition-of-armenian-genocide-not-number-one-priority-of-the-government-fm/>.

Iran’s Policy On Armenia Unchanged, Says New FM”, *Azatutyun Radiokayan*, August 23, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33090278.html>.

“Iran’s Veep in Armenia for Eurasian Economic Forum”, *Tasnim News Agency*, October 1, 2024, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2024/10/01/3169214/iran-s-veep-in-armenia-for-eurasianeconomic-forum.>

“Iranian, Armenian Officials Pledge Continued Collaboration”, *Tasnim News Agency*, May 30, 2024, <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2024/05/30/3095715/iranian-armenian-officials-pledgecontinued-collaboration#:~:text=Baqeri%20highl>

ighted%20the%20significance%20of,and%20stability %20in%20the%20Caucasus.

“Joint Statement: COP29 is Being Used as a Cover for Ethnic Cleansing,” World Council of Churches, last modified November 11, 2024, <https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/documents/joint-statement-cop29-is-being-used-as-a-cover-for-ethnic-cleansing>.

“Latest Version of Draft Peace Treaty Contains Fully Agreed Upon Articles, Says Armenian FM”, ArmenPress, September 9, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199368>.

“Matanat Nasibova, “Azerbaijan’s Call for Minsk Group’s End Meets Armenian Defiance”, Caliber, August 16, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/azerbaijan-s-call-for-minsk-group-s-end-meets-armenian-defiance>.

“Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Estonia”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia, June 27, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/27/Mirzoyan\\_Tsahkna/12715](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/27/Mirzoyan_Tsahkna/12715).

“Meeting of Foreign Ministers of Armenia and Lithuania””, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia, June 20, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/20/Mirzoyan\\_Landsbergis/12704](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/20/Mirzoyan_Landsbergis/12704).

Mirzoyan and US Deputy Secretary of State Huck Discuss Regulation of Armenian-Azerbaijani Relations”, News.am, September 19, 2024, <https://news.am/eng/news/843355.html>.

Moscow Categorically Disagrees with Armenian PM’s Criticism of CSTO — Kremlin”, TASS, September 18, 2024, <https://tass.com/politics/1844713>.

“Moscow Is Ready To Get Involved In Azerbaijan-Armenia Peace Process, Putin Says”, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, August 19, 2024, <https://www.rferl.org/a/putin-ilham-laiyev-armenia-azerbaijan-baku-talks/33084517.html>.

“Muhammet Tarhan, Sümeyye Dilara Dinçer, “Bakan Fidan: Güney Kafkasya’ya Bakışımızın Temelinde Bölgesel Sahiplenme Anlayışımız Bulunmakta”, Anadolu Ajansı, October 18, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/gundem/bakan-fidan-guney-kafkasyaya-bakisimizin-temelinde-bolgesel-sahiplenme-anlayisimiz-bulunmakta/3366083>.

Nigar Abbasova, “Lavrov: Russia, Türkiye, Iran Offered Baku, Yerevan to Use 3+3 Platform to Complete Work on Peace Treaty”, Report News Agency, October 18, 2024, <https://report.az/en/foreignpolitics/lavrov-russia-turkiye-iran-offered-baku-yerevan-to-use-3-3-platform-to-complete-work-on-peace-treaty/?ysclid=m331kkym55869640423>.

“No: 152, 30 July 2024, Regarding the Fifth Meeting of the Special Representatives for the Normalization Process between Türkiye and Armenia”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, July 30, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-152\\_-turkiye-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcilerinin-besinci-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-152_-turkiye-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcilerinin-besinci-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa)

“No: 216, 18 October 2024, Regarding the Third Meeting of the 3+3 Regional Cooperation Platform in İstanbul”, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Of Türkiye, October 18, 2024, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_-216\\_-istanbul-da-duzenlenen-3-3-guney-kafkasya-bolgesel-isbirligi-platformunu-n-ucuncu-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-216_-istanbul-da-duzenlenen-3-3-guney-kafkasya-bolgesel-isbirligi-platformunu-n-ucuncu-toplantisi-hk.en.mfa)

“Not A Single Millimeter of Armenian Territory is Up for Debate” - Pashinyan”, JamNews, September 16, 2024, <https://jam-news.net/not-a-single-millimeter-of-the-territory-of-armenia-is-up-for-debate-pashinyan/>.

“Our Goal is to Make Armenia-Diaspora Relations More Institutional and State-Oriented - PM”, ArmenPress, September 20, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1200375>.

“Participation of the Foreign Minister of Armenia in the Warsaw Security Forum”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia, October 2, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/02/Mirzoyan\\_WSF/12879](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/02/Mirzoyan_WSF/12879).

“Pashinian Blasts Armenia’s Independence Declaration,” Azatutyun, last modified November 14, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33202094.html>.

“Pashinyan Meets with Iran’s Khamenei in Tehran”, ArmenPress, July 30, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1196706>.

“Pashinyan, Lukashenko Meet During BRICS Summit”, ArmenPress, October 25, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203185>.

“Pashinyan’s Proposal Came to Life: “History of Armenia” Instead of “History of Armenians””, Media Max, July 11, 2024, <https://mediamax.am/en/news/education/55246/>.

“PM Pashinyan Holds Meeting with Iranian President” ArmenPress, October 24, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203086>.

“Police Attempt to Stop Catholicos Karekin II from Visiting Sardarabad Monument”, Asbarez, May 28, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/police-attempt-to-stop-catholicos-karekin-ii-from-visiting-sardarabad-monument/>.

“Polish President Arrives in Armenia for Meetings with Top Officials,” Caliber.Az, last modified November 25, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/polish-president-arrives-in-armenia-for-meetings-with-top-officials>.

“Political Consultations between The Foreign Ministries of Armenia And Ukraine”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia, June 17, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/17/arm\\_ua\\_politicalconsultation/12697](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/17/arm_ua_politicalconsultation/12697).

“President Erdoğan Meets with PM Pashinyan of Armenia”, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, September 24, 2024, <https://www.tccb.gov.tr/en/news/542/153707/president-erdogan-meets-with-pm-pashinyan-of-armenia>.

President Erdoğan, Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia Talk Over Phone”, Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications, June 19, 2024, <https://www.iletisim.gov.tr/english/haberler/detay/president-erdogan-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia-talk-over-phone>.

“Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s Working Visit to the French Republic”, The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, October 3, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2024/10/03/Nikol-Pashinyan-visiting-France/>.

“Prime Minister on Erdogan’s Statement Regarding Turkey’s Participation in 44-day War”, Lurer, August 31, 2024, <https://www.1lurer.am/en/2024/08/31/Prime-Minister-on-Erdogan-s-statement-regarding-Turkey-s-participation-in-44-day-war/1180037>.

“Prime Minister Pashinyan Receives the Delegation Led by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joshua Huck”, The Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia, September 20, 2024, <https://www.primeminister.am/en/press-release/item/2024/09/20/Nikol-Pashinyan-meeting-20-09>.

“Rabia İclal Turan, “Armenia Ready for ‘Full Normalization’ with Türkiye, Welcomes ‘Positive Dynamics’”, Anadolu Agency, September 28, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/turkiye/armenia-ready-for-full-normalization-with-turkiye-welcomes-positive-dynamics-/3344531#>.

“SCO Secretary-General Meets with Foreign Minister of Armenia”, The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, June 8, 2024, <https://eng.sectsco.org/20240608/1388471.html>.

“Secretary Blinken’s Call with Armenian Prime Minister Pashinyan”, U.S. Department of State, September 13, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/secretary-blinkens-call-with-armenian-prime-minister-pashinyan-17/>.

Shoghik Galstian, “Garegin Warns Armenian Church’s Detractors In Mass Attended By Pashinian”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, September 30, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/garegin-warns-armenian-churchs-detractors-in-mass-attended-by-pashinian/33140850.html>.

Shoghik Galstian, “Pashinian Again Calls For New Armenian Constitution”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, July 5, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33023447.html>.

Shoghik Galstian, “Pashinian Calls Russian-Led Alliance Security Threat to Armenia”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, September 18, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33124969.html>.

Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Armenia’s Foreign Policy ‘on The Right Track’ – PM”, Public Radio of Armenia, October 2, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/02/armenias-foreign-policy-on-the-right-track-pm/>.

Siranush Ghazanchyan, “Presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan Confirm Ratification of The Regulation on Joint Activity of Border Commissions”, Public Radio of Armenia, October 25, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/25/presidents-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan-confirm-ratification-of-the-regulation-on-joint-activity-of-border-commissions/>.

Siranush Ghazanchyan, “US Confirms Nuclear Pact with Armenia ‘Under Consideration’”, Public Radio of Armenia, August 22, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/08/22/us-confirms-nuclear-pact-with-armenia-under-consideration-civilnet/#:~:text=The%20United%20States%20has%20confirmed,written%20comments%20to%20CivilNet%20Tuesday>.

“South Caucasus Opens Doors to Peace - Turkish President,” Trend News Agency, last modified November 6, 2024, <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3965919.html>.

“Statement by The Foreign Minister of Armenia for The Press Following the Meeting with The Foreign Minister of Georgia”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, July 3, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-conference/2024/07/03/fms\\_armenia\\_georgia/12729](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-conference/2024/07/03/fms_armenia_georgia/12729).

“Telephone Conversation between The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia And Türkiye”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia, June 25, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/25/mirzoyan\\_fidan/12712](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/25/mirzoyan_fidan/12712).

“Tensions Continue to Rise Between Armenia, Belarus”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, June 14, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/32993532.html>.

The 12th Liturgy Was Held in the Armenian Holy Cross Church of Aghtamar Island, in Which the Delegation of Western Armenia also Participated”, Western Armenia TV, September 10, 2024, [https://westernarmeniatv.com/en/society\\_en/the-12th-liturgy-was-held-in-the-armenian-holy-cross-church-of-aghtamar-island-in-which-the-delegation-of-western-armenia-also-participated/](https://westernarmeniatv.com/en/society_en/the-12th-liturgy-was-held-in-the-armenian-holy-cross-church-of-aghtamar-island-in-which-the-delegation-of-western-armenia-also-participated/).

“The Joint Armenia-U.S. Military Exercise “EAGLE PARTNER 2024””, Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Armenia, July 15, 2024, <https://mil.am/en/news/12290>.

“The meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Ukraine”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Armenia, June 29, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/29/Mirzoyan\\_Kuleba/12721](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/06/29/Mirzoyan_Kuleba/12721).

“The Meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Armenia and Türkiye”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, October 18, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/18/Mirzoyan\\_Fidan/12898](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/10/18/Mirzoyan_Fidan/12898).

“The Prime Minister again Offered Azerbaijan to Sign The Peace Treaty”, Radar Armenia, October 24, 2024, <https://radar.am/en/news/politics-2659552253/#:~:text=RA%20Prime%20Minister%20Nikol%20Pashinyan,each%20other%20in%20the%20future>.

“The Start of The Two-Day Visit of The Foreign Minister of France to Armenia”, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, September 15, 2024, [https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/09/15/sejourne\\_armenia\\_visit/12825](https://www.mfa.am/en/press-releases/2024/09/15/sejourne_armenia_visit/12825).

“The Third Meeting of the “3+3” Regional Cooperation Platform Joint

Communique, 18 October 2024”, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs of the Republic Of Türkiye, October 18, 2024, <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-third-meeting-of-the-3-3-regional-cooperation-platform-joint-communique-18-october-2024.en.mfa>

The United States of America and the Republic of Armenia Sign a Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Civil Nuclear Cooperation”, U.S. Department of State, May 2, 2022, <https://www.state.gov/the-united-states-of-america-and-the-republic-of-armenia-sign-a-memorandum-of-understanding-concerning-strategic-civil-nuclear-cooperation/>.

“Top U.S., Armenian Generals Meet in Washington”, Azatutyun Radiokayan, October 17, 2024, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/33162699.html>.

Trump Vows to Restore Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace if Elected, Slams Harris For Doing ‘Nothing’ During NK Ethnic Cleansing”, ArmenPress, October 24, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1203077>.

Tuğba Altun, “Armenia-Azerbaijan Peace Crucial for Caucasus Stability, Says Turkish Intelligence Chief”, Anadolu Agency, September 17, 2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/armenia-azerbaijan-peace-crucial-for-caucasus-stability-says-turkish-intelligence-chief/3332315>.

“Turkey Not Implementing Agreement on Border Opening with Armenia”, Asbarez, June 11, 2024, <https://asbarez.com/turkey-not-implementing-agreement-on-border-opening-with-armenia/>.

“Turkey’s Normalization of Relations with Armenia Will Contribute to Azerbaijan Acting More Constructively in Negotiations: Ambassador Mkrtchyan’s Interview with Financial Mirror”, ArmenPress, June 28, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1194704>.

“U.S. ‘Investigates’ Karabakh Exodus to Decide if it’s Ethnic Cleansing”, The California Courier, July 11, 2024, <https://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/u-s-investigates-karabakh-exodus-to-decide-if-its-ethnic-cleansing/>.

“U.S. Hosts Key Meeting Between Armenia and Azerbaijan in New York”, The Armenian Report, September 26, 2024, <https://en.armradio.am/2024/10/25/presidents-of-armenia-and-azerbaijan-confirmratification-of-the-regulation-on-joint-activity-of-border-commissions/>.

“U.S. Launches New Department to Liaise with Local Governments in Armenia”, Asbarez, June 17, 2024, <https://www.asbarez.com/u-s-launches-new-department-to-liaise-with-local-governments-in-armenia/>.



“U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken made a phone call to the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev”, President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, September 16, 2024, <https://president.az/en/articles/view/66844>.

“UK Foreign Secretary Says Azerbaijan ‘Liberated’ Nagorno-Karabakh; Yerevan Reportedly Seeks Clarification from Foreign Office”, Asbarez, September 20, 2024, <https://www.asbarez.com/uk-foreign-secretary-says-azerbaijan-liberated-nagorno-karabakh-yerevan-reportedly-seeks-clarification-from-foreign-office/>.

“Unacceptable to Single Out One Article When Others Are Unfulfilled, PM Pashinyan Says on 2020 Trilateral Statement”, ArmenPress, October 12, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1202121>.

“Under Secretary Zeya’s Travel to Georgia and Armenia”, U.S. Department of State, July 10, 2024, <https://www.state.gov/under-secretary-zeyas-travel-to-georgia-and-armenia/>.

“Unlike Armenia, Azerbaijani Constitution Indeed Contains Territorial Claims – PM”, ArmenPress, August 31, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1198730>.

“US First Deputy Secretary of State to Visit Armenia”, Caliber, June 14, 2024, <https://caliber.az/en/post/us-first-deputy-secretary-of-state-to-visit-armenia>.

“USAID Head to Visit Armenia”, ED News, July 8, 2024, <https://ednews.net/en/news/world/669040-usaid-head-to-visit-armenia>.

“USAID to Increase Assistance to Armenia to \$250 Million”, Report News Agency, September 11, 2024, <https://report.az/en/region/usaid-to-increase-assistance-to-armenia-to-250-million/>.

“Working visit of the President Vahagn Khachaturyan to Turkmenistan”, The President of the Republic of Armenia, October 10, 2024, <https://www.president.am/en/foreign-visits/item/2024/10/10/President-Vahagn-Khachaturyans-working-visit-to-Turkmenistan/>.

“Zangezur Corridor’ is a fake corridor - Ebrahim Azizi”, ArmenPress, September 7, 2024, <https://armenpress.am/en/article/1199273>.

“Zangezur Corridor’: Details of the Negotiations Revealed”, AzeMedia, August 29, 2024, <https://aze.media/zangezur-corridor-details-of-the-negotiations-revealed/>.

Անկախության հռչակագրի և ՀՀ Սահմանադրության  
բովանդակությունները նույնական չեն Փաշինյան”, Azatutyun  
Radiokayan, August 23, 2024.

## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

**To cite this article:** Tecimer, Tuğçe. “The First Arab Incursions to the Armenian Region and Theodoros Rshtuni's Regional Policy”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 50 (2024): 77-88.

**Received:** 07.11.2024

**Accepted:** 20.11.2024

# THE FIRST ARAB INCURSIONS TO THE ARMENIAN REGION AND THEODOROS RSHTUNI'S REGIONAL POLICY

(ERMENİLERİN YAŞADIKLARI BÖLGEYE İLK ARAP AKINLARI  
VE TEODOROS RŞTUNİ'NİN BÖLGE POLİTİKASI)

Tuğçe TECİMER\*

**Abstract:** *This article provides an analysis of the initial Arab incursions into the region historically inhabited by Armenians and the pivotal role of Theodoros Rshtuni in shaping regional political strategies during the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The incursions marked a significant geopolitical shift as Armenian territories, previously influenced by Byzantine and Sasanian powers, faced new pressures from Arab expansion. This period underscored the strategic responses by local Armenian leaders, with Theodoros being a central figure. His leadership was crucial in navigating these turbulent times, particularly in his formation of alliances and redefining of Armenian political and military strategies. In this article, Armenian primary sources and research work is used to analyze Theodoros' decisions within the broader context of Armenian resistance and adaptation to the changing political landscape, highlighting the complex interplay of loyalty, power, and survival strategies among the Armenian nobility.*

**Keywords:** *Arab incursions, Theodoros Rshtuni, Armenian nobility, Geopolitical strategy, Byzantine influence, Sasanian Empire.*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0671-2327>

Tarih Bilim Uzmanı, İstanbul Üniversitesi Doktora Adayı, E-mail: tugcetecimer@gmail.com

**Özet:** *Bu makale, tarihsel olarak Ermenilerin yaşadığı bölgeye gerçekleştirilen ilk Arap akınlarının ve Teodoros Rştuni'nin 7. yüzyılda bölgesel siyasi stratejileri şekillendirmedeki önemli rolünün bir analizini sunmaktadır. Akınlar, daha önce Bizans ve Sasani güçlerinin etkisinde olan Ermeni topraklarının Arap yayılmasının neden olduğu yeni baskılarla karşı karşıya kalmasıyla, önemli bir jeopolitik değişime işaret etmiştir. Bu dönem, Teodoros'un bir ana figür olduğu yerel Ermeni liderlerinin stratejik tepkilerini vurgulamıştır. Teodoros'un liderliği, özellikle kurduğu ittifaklar ve Ermeni siyasi ve askeri stratejilerini yeniden tanımlaması açısından, bu kaotik dönemlerde izlenen politikalarda hayati önem taşımıştır. Bu makalede, Ermeni ana kaynakları ve araştırma eserleri kullanılarak Teodoros'un kararları Ermeni direnişi ve Ermenilerin değişen siyasi duruma uyum sağlamaları analiz edilmiş; Ermeni soyluları arasındaki sadakat, güç ve hayatta kalma stratejilerinin karmaşık etkileşimi vurgulanmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Arap akınları, Teodoros Rştuni, Ermeni soyluları, Jeopolitik strateji, Bizans etkisi, Sasani İmparatorluğu.*

## The Beginning of the Arab Incursions, the Geopolitical Transformation of the Region and the Rise of Theodoros

The arrival of the Arabs in the Caucasus and what is now called Eastern Anatolia in the middle of the 7th century not only changed the region's political situation completely, but also caused significant changes in the history of Armenians. With the elimination of the Sassanids by the Arabs in the Battle of Nihāwend (642) and Byzantium's shift to a defensive position, there was no balancing power left to support and protect the Armenians in the region against new conquests. In other words, there was no longer any factor to prevent the Arabs from advancing into the Caucasus and Byzantine lands. Thus, the fight for dominance that had been going on for years between the Byzantine and Sassanid states would henceforth continue between the Byzantine Empire and the Arab Caliphate.

When the Arabs arrived in the Armenian lands, the Armenian noble families of the Syniks (Սյունիքներ) were ruling southeast of Lake Sevan, the Bznunis<sup>1</sup> (Բզնունիներ) northwest of Lake Van, the Kamsarakans<sup>2</sup> (Կամսարակասներ) in the north, and the Rshtuns (Ռշտունիներ) south of Lake Van.

The Mamikonians (Մամիկոնյաններ), who held the title of Sparapet<sup>3</sup> (սպարապետ), were gradually losing their authority. The continuous weakening of the Mamikonians worsened the rivalry between the ever-competing nakharars<sup>4</sup>, creating chaos and a power vacuum in the region. Theodoros Rshtuni (Թեոդորոս Ռշտունի, d. 656), the head of the Rshtuni family, like other nakharars, wanted to take advantage of the power vacuum in the region and played an important role in the political life of the region by engaging in a number of activities for this purpose.

Although the exact date and place of Theodoros' birth are unknown, it is believed that he was born in Damascus in 654. Until 628, when he was appointed by the Sassanid Marzpan to head the Armenian troops in the region, we do not know much about his life. In 634, he assumed the position of Marzpan<sup>5</sup> himself.<sup>6</sup>

1 For detailed information on the Armenian noble family, see "*Bznuniner*", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran II, p. 428.

2 The Kamsarakans, an Armenian noble family, are thought to have existed between the III and VIII centuries. For more information, see "*Kamsarakanner*", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran V, p. 215.

3 Sparapet was the Armenian title given to the commander-in-chief. For more information, see Anonymous, "*Sparaped*", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran XI, p. 57.

4 Naharar is a hereditary title given to noble Armenian families in the Middle Ages. For detailed information on the origin and meaning of the word, see H. Acaryan, "*Naharar*", Hayeren Armatakan Bararan III, p. 420.

5 The Marzpanate was an administrative unit of Sassanid rule. The person given the title of Marzpan deputized the king as a kind of governor of the region. For detailed information, see S.Yeremyan, "*Marzpan*", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran VII, p. 313.

6 V. Vardanyan, *Theodoros Rshtuni*", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran IV., p. 172.

Theodoros, an eminent Armenian military and political figure during the 7<sup>th</sup> century Arab incursions, significantly shaped the Armenian defense strategies and their diplomatic relations with surrounding powers. The most obvious sign of his rise was the title given to him by the Roman Emperor Constans II. This title was an integral part of the emperor's efforts to align the Armenian Church with Constantinople—a move that was ultimately rebuffed by the Armenians.

Under Theodoros' leadership, strategic alliances were pivotal. After rejecting the emperor's ecclesiastical directives, Theodoros navigated the Armenians into a critical alliance with the Arabs, as chronicled by the historian Sebeos. This alliance, underscores the desperate yet strategic nature of Theodoros' decisions during a time when the Armenian polity faced pressures from the collapsing Sasanian Empire and both Arab and Byzantine encroachments.

Theodoros' alliance with the Arabs was instrumental in enabling Armenians to maintain their power during a period of conflict and played a critical role in the broader geopolitical transformations of the region. This alliance not only fortified his position within Armenian society but also delineated the complex interplay of power, religion, and diplomacy in medieval Armenia.<sup>7</sup>

### The Impacts of Arab Incursions on Armenian Nakharars

The Arab incursions markedly transformed the societal architecture of Armenian nobility, engendering shifts in power structures and necessitating adaptations in roles and allegiances. As the traditional Armenian noble families navigated this tumultuous era, certain families like the Bagratunis<sup>8</sup> (Բագրատունիներ) gained ascendancy, often facilitated by Arab support, while others such as the Mamikonians experienced a decline in their heretofore dominant status. This reconfiguration of power was further complicated by the strategic decisions nobles made in response to the dual pressures from the Byzantine Empire and Arab rulers.

The role of Armenian nobles evolved from mere regional influencers to pivotal players in the broader geopolitical arena, balancing their loyalties between the Byzantines and Arabs. This period was marked by frequent shifts in allegiance, where nobles oscillated between opposition to and collaboration with Arab rulers, often influenced by the immediate political exigencies. Such strategies

7 İlhami Tekin Cinemre. "Alliance with Hell: Romans vs Armenians and Arabs." *ARAMAZD: Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (2019). <https://doi.org/10.32028/ajnes.v13i2.966>.

8 There are various debates as to whether the Bagratunids, an Armenian noble family, were of Hebrew or Persian origin. The Bagratunis, who emerged victorious from their struggle for influence with the Mamikonians, are among the most important figures in medieval Armenian history. For detailed information, see "Bagratuniner" Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran II, p. 201 etc.

were crucial for maintaining autonomy and ensuring the survival of noble lineages and their estates.<sup>9</sup>

Theodoros' tenure is particularly illustrative of the era's complexities. His acceptance of Arab suzerainty not only realigned the nobility's political stance but also served as a pragmatic adaptation to the new power dynamics imposed by the Arab conquests. Theodoros' leadership was polarizing among his contemporaries; while some viewed his actions as a necessary pragmatism to safeguard Armenian interests, others perceived them as betrayals of their sovereignty.<sup>10</sup>

The Arab incursions served as a catalyst that profoundly altered the structure and dynamics of Armenian nobility, prompting shifts in power, realignments of loyalty, and significant adaptations in the socio-political fabric of the region. These changes underscore the nobility's critical role in the survival and transformation of Armenian society during a period of intense external pressures.

### The First Arab Incursions, Theodoros' Leadership Strategies and Political Maneuvers

Armenian sources state that the first Arab incursions into the region took place in 639-640 through Persian territory into the canton of Goghtn (Գողթն) and the territory of Nakhchivan (Նախճավան).<sup>11</sup> During this march, the Arab vanguard captured many prisoners and used a passage at Jugha (Ջուղա) to cross the Aras River. The Arab armies then split into two branches. One of these branches returned to take the captives back to their own lands, while the other passed through the Artaz (Արտաշ)<sup>12</sup> region to carry out an attack against the Byzantine general Procopius, who was camped in the Kogovit (Կոգովիտ)<sup>13</sup> region near Bazudzor (Բազունձոր) and Mardutsayk (Մարդուցայք).<sup>14</sup> The first Arab incursions into Anatolia appear to have been

9 Christos G. Makrypoulas, "The Arab Invasions and the Rise of the Bagratuni 640-884," *Cristo Raul*, accessed October 9, 2024, <https://www.cristoraul.org/BYZANTIUM/The-Arab-Invasions-and-the-Rise-of-the-Bagratuni-640-884.pdf>.

10 Preiser-Kapeller, Johannes. "Chapter 12 Aristocrats, Mercenaries, Clergymen and Refugees: Deliberate and Forced Mobility of Armenians in the Early Medieval Mediterranean (6th to 11th Century a.d.)." In *Migration Histories of the Medieval Afroeurasian Transition Zone*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020) doi: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004425613\\_013](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004425613_013)

11 Gevond, Gevond Badmutyun, Yerevan 1982, p. 20.

12 Located in Vaspuragan.

13 It is located in the Vaspuragan Territory, to the right of the city of Maku. Anonymous, "Mardastan", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran VII., p. 307.

14 A province thought to be centered in and around present-day Dogubayazit. M. Katvalyan, "Kogovit", Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran V, p. 502.



exploratory in nature, often resulting in looting and capturing prisoners. However, they did not hesitate to hold on to suitable lands.

Theodoros, who received the news that the Arab armies were advancing on Kogovit, warned the Byzantine general to take precautions, but Procopius, who relied on the superiority of his troops numbers, ignored this warning and did not answer any of Theodoros' letters.<sup>15</sup>

According to Gevond, Procopius, tired of Theodoros' insistence, threw a staff at him, and afterwards Theodoros armed his troops against the Arabs, slaughtered the Arab troops he had ambushed near Yeghbark (Եղբարք), and took their war spoils. Theodoros left Procopius and went to Garni (Գառնի). Although Procopius also marched against the Arabs after this incident, most of his soldiers were killed by the Arab troops, and those who survived and escaped to their camps were pursued and massacred, thus wiping out Procopius' army.<sup>16</sup>

Armenian sources mention that the Arabs attacked the region again in 642. After taking Taron, Pznunik (Պզնունիք)<sup>17</sup> and Aghiovit, the Arabs marched through the Pergri valley and Kogovit to Ararat and Dvin.<sup>18</sup> Gevond states that all the soldiers of the city were in Dzor with Theodoros to stop the Arabs and that the city was defenseless.<sup>19</sup> Sebeos, on the other hand, stated that the ishkhans Theodoros Vahevuni, Khachian Aravelian and Shabouh Amaduni crossed and destroyed the Azad or Medzamor bridge and reached the city before the Arabs and were able to give early warning of the Arab army approaching and thus had the opportunity to prepare, but were betrayed.<sup>20</sup> In 642, the Arabs captured the city of Dvin and returned to their headquarters with large spoils and captives. Sebeos stated that Theodoros attacked the Arab army on his way back but failed<sup>21</sup>, while Gevond wrote that Theodoros did not dare to attack because his army was outnumbered.<sup>22</sup>

It is known that before this defeat against the Arabs, Theodoros was one of the most powerful figures in the region. After the death of Yazr I. (Եզր Լ Փառաժնակերպի) in 641, the Byzantine-supporting Dayk bishop Nerses III. Ներսէս Գ Տայեցի, who would later be known as Shinogh (Շինոց),

15 Gevond, p. 21.

16 Gevond, p. 21.

17 The name Pyznunik, which is frequently found in medieval Armenian sources, is used for Lake Van and its surroundings. It is seen that Lake Van is called "Lake Piznunik".

18 Sebeos, Sebeos Padmutyun (Translated by G. Khachadryan, V. Yediazaryan), Yerevan 2005, p. 205.

19 Gevond, p. 22.

20 Sebeos, p. 205.

21 Sebeos, p. 91.

22 Gevond, p. 23.

was assigned to the position of Catholicos. Nerses was appointed with the approval of Theodoros.<sup>23</sup> After the defeat, Theodoros maintained his position in the region. Byzantium must have been pleased that its ally Theodoros had a say in the region, as the Emperor appointed the Armenian nakharar as the commander-in-chief of the Armenian troops for his support.<sup>24</sup>

Theodoros, who was chosen as the captain general, first took advantage of his reputation in the eyes of Emperor Constantine to ask for the pardon of the Armenians who had been exiled to Africa by the Emperor during the period of Heraclius, and especially of the aspet named Varaz Dirots Bagratuni III (Վարազ-Տիրոց Գ. Բագրատունի)<sup>25</sup>, the son of Smbat, with whom he had once collaborated against the Persians.<sup>26</sup> The fact that the Emperor fulfilled this wish is also significant in terms of showing the importance of Theodoros for Byzantium.

Emperor Constans appointed a ruler named T'umas (Թումա) to the region where Armenians lived. Sebeos reports that T'umas had seized Theodoros with a false accusation in order to make a pact with the Medes, and that the emperor, who was aware of the situation, summoned him to the palace and did justice in Theodoros's regard, where he was acquitted and granted an annual income, while T'umas was disgraced and stripped him of his rank.<sup>27</sup>

At a time when Theodoros was preoccupied with the slander of T'umas, Varaz Dirots, for whom he had begged the emperor for forgiveness, fled to Tayk' (Տայք) in disguise with three of his men. Constans ordered Theodoros to arrest Khosrov Shum, but Theodoros disobeyed the emperor's order, supported Aspet and sent Catholicos Nersés as a mediator to negotiate with him. The Catholicos informed Aspet that he would be given the rank of the prince of the country if he took an oath of good faith/loyalty to the emperor. He sent a written oath of loyalty to the emperor, agreed to be his 'servant' and was honoured by Constans with the ranks of curopalates and ishkhan, along with valuable gifts.<sup>28</sup> However, before the edict and the gifts reached him, he suddenly fell ill and died.<sup>29</sup>

After the death of Varaz Dirots, the emperor gave his rank and the position of aspet to his elder son, Smbat. He also made him droungarios of his army and

23 Anonymous, "*Nerses G Tayetsi*" Ներսիս Գ Տայեցի, Kristorya Hayastan Hanragitaran, p. 781 etc.

24 Sebeos, p. 215.

25 This person in Sebeos' work was stated to be Hosrov Shum. See, Sebeos, p. 217.

26 Sebeos, p. 217.

27 For detailed information about the arrest of Theodoros Rshtuni by Tuma, see Sebeos, p. 217.

28 Sebeos, p. 219

29 Sebeos, p. 221; Also see, A. Ter-Gevondyan, "*Varazdirots Bagratuni*" Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran XI, p. 306.

married him to one of the Arsacids, who was a relative of his.<sup>30</sup> Afterwards, he gave Theodoros the rank of commander in chief and sent him to the region where the Armenians lived.

As a result of the events, Theodoros realized that his interests with Byzantium were no longer compatible and abandoned his pro-Byzantine stance. For Byzantium, the Armenian nakharar, which had previously abandoned his commander Procopius, acted with the fugitive Varaz Dirots and, more importantly, was growing stronger in the region, was no longer a reliable ally. Moreover, the Emperor, who did not trust Theodoros because of his role in the Council of Dvin (645), dismissed him and replaced him with Smbat Bagratuni.<sup>31</sup> By doing so, he aimed both to reduce Theodoros' influence in the region and to neutralize the Rshtunis and Bagratunis through each other.

Although the Emperor had dismissed Theodoros, he must have still needed him in the battle against the Arabs, for he wrote a letter to Theodoros, inviting him to fight against the Arabs with the army under his command. By summoning Theodoros, the Emperor wanted to benefit not only from his military power but also from the influence of Theodoros, a powerful nakharar, on the people of the region. Theodoros, however, did not respond to the emperor's call, probably because he thought that his interests were no longer in common with Byzantium. Constans II then sent another letter stating that he would destroy the House of Rshtuni if they did not join the war.<sup>32</sup>

Theodoros, forced to obey the emperor's ultimatum, sent his son Vard (Վարդ) to Smbat, who was fighting for Byzantium, but Theodoros' aim was not to act as an ally with Byzantium but to fight against it. Following Theodoros' orders, Vard went to Smbat and must have gained the commander's trust because Smbat accepted his request to become a bridge guard.<sup>33</sup> When the battle began, Vard continued to fight alongside the Byzantine army until he was sure that the Arabs would win, and when he saw that the Arab army was repelling the Byzantine forces, he crossed to the other side of the river with the soldiers attached to him, severed the ropes of the bridge and prevented the Byzantine forces from escaping. After the battle, which resulted in the victory of the Arabs, a treaty was concluded between Theodoros and Muawiya (652) in which the Armenians were obliged to pay taxes and give hostages to the Arabs.<sup>34</sup>

30 Sebeos, p. 221.

31 Gevond, p. 24.

32 Gevond, p. 24.

33 Gevond, p. 25.

34 As a result of this agreement between the Armenians and the Arabs, names such as Grigor from the Mamikonean House and Smbat from the Bagratuni House, who were extremely important for the Armenians, were given as hostages. However, Muawiya later gave them the title of Iskhan and sent them back to their homeland with gifts. [See, Gevond, p. 25etc.] "Let this be the pact of my treaty between me and you for as many years as you may wish. I shall not take tribute from you for a three-

After the agreement between Theodoros and Muawiya, Constans II, who did not want to lose his dominance in the region against the Arabs, came to the region at the head of a large army. Although the Emperor was warned by the Arabs when he arrived near Derjan (Դերջան) that the region was under Arab rule and that he should stop his advance, he continued advancing until he reached Karin (Erzurum).<sup>35</sup> Here the emperor was greeted with a show of respect from the nakharars who had left Theodoros' side earlier. It can be assumed that the nakharars were not only disturbed by Theodoros's collaboration with the Arabs, but also by his unstoppable rise in the region. Sebeos reports that among those who came to the emperor were the Bagratuniks, Khorkhoruniks (Խորխորունիներ), Mushegh Mamikonean (Մուշեղ Մամիկոնյան), Varazhnuniks (Վարաշաժնունիներ) and many other Armenian nakharars as well as the Catholicos Nersés.<sup>36</sup> The lords who came to pledge their loyalty to the emperor cursed Theodoros for his treachery, stripped him of all the honors bestowed upon him and appointed a replacement. Theodoros arrested and imprisoned the person appointed to take his place together with forty of his soldiers, and he himself went to the Island of Aghtamar and took precautions.

The emperor, who wanted to make Theodoros pay for his betrayal, aimed to plunder the region where the Armenians lived, but the pleas of Nersés and Mushegh Mamikonean must have been effective as he abandoned this decision. The emperor marched with his troops to Dvin and settled in the residence of the Catholicos, appointed Mushegh Mamikonean as his deputy and put him in charge of the cavalry unit, which he could use against the Theodoros threat.<sup>37</sup> Afterwards, Chalcedonian Christology was preached in all the churches in Dvin, and services were held in Byzantine style in the Surp Krikor cathedral. Nersés and all the Armenian bishops attended the services (the Eucharist) with the emperor.<sup>38</sup>

### Cooperation with the Arabs

After staying in Dvin for a while, Constans II appointed a man named Maurianus as governor and left Dvin. With the emperor's departure from the

---

year period. Then you will pay [tribute] with an oath, as much as you may wish. You will keep in your country 15,000 cavalry and provide sustenance from your country; and I shall reckon it in the royal tax. I shall not request the cavalry for Syria; but wherever else I command they shall be ready for duty. I shall not send amirs! to [your] fortresses, nor an Arab army — neither many, nor even down to a single cavalryman. An enemy shall not enter Armenia; and if the Romans attack you, I shall send you troops in support, as many as you may wish. See, Sebeos, p. 263.

35 Sebeos, p. 265.

36 Sebeos, p. 265.

37 Sebeos, p. 267.

38 Sebeos, p. 269.

region, the Patriarch Nersés thought that there was no one left to protect himself against Theodoros and went to Tayk'. This was because both Theodoros and the people of the region were angry against Nersés for accepting the Council of Chalcedon.<sup>39</sup>

Theodoros left Aghtamar after Constans's departure and together with his son-in-law Hamazasp Mamikonean, he asked for help from the Arabs. The Arabs sent a troop of 7,000 soldiers, which he stationed north and northwest of Lake Van, at Atiovit and Bznunik.<sup>40</sup> From there, Theodoros went to Damascus to join Muawiya and was honored by Muawiya, who bestowed various gifts on him and gave him authority over the lands of 'Armenia, Iberia, Atuank' and Siwnik'.<sup>41</sup> Thus, Theodoros' loyalty was once again reinforced by the Arabs.

While Theodoros continued to cooperate with the Arabs, the other nakharars must have thought that the reason why they were always under Byzantine or Arab rule was because of their long-standing and endless conflicts between them, so they sought reconciliation. The pro-Arab nakharars, including prominent figures such as Hamazasp and Mushegh Mamikonean, and the nakharars who supported Byzantine rule and other notables of the region gathered together and made an agreement that they would no longer clash with each other and shed blood. Thus, the Armenian nakharars spent the winter without fighting. Theodoros, who was ill at the time, went into seclusion for a while on the island of Aghtamar, but the nakharars, taking the absence of Theodoros as an opportunity, appointed tax-gatherers and divided the taxes of the region among them.<sup>42</sup>

Sebeos reported that Theodoros, after regaining his health, sought the support of the Arabs in order to restore order, saying, "*He requested for himself troops from the Ismaelites in order to strike the Armenian and expel them, and to put the Iberians to the sword.*"<sup>43</sup> This policy of Theodoros was also an opportunity for the Arabs who wanted to consolidate their dominance in the region. On this occasion, the Arabs under the command of Habib b. Maslama came as far as Aruch (Արուճ). The Byzantine commander Morianos took advantage of the coming of winter to march on the Arab army, which was not used to winter conditions, and forced the Arabs to retreat to Zarehawan (Զարհաւան) until the end of winter. The Byzantines advanced as far as Dvin and besieged Nakhchivan, but were defeated by the Arab army, which attacked again in the spring. The Arabs advanced as far as Karin, plundering most of the towns of

39 Sebeos, p. 273.

40 Sebeos, p. 273.

41 Sebeos, p. 274.

42 Sebeos, p. 281.

43 Sebeos, p. 281.

the region, looting churches and taking many hostages from the nakharar families.<sup>44</sup> Theodoros was also taken by the Arabs to Damascus (655), where he died before he had a chance to return home.<sup>45</sup>

Theodoros' death accelerated the downfall of the Rshtuniks. The Rshtuniks continued to exist under the rule of the Artsruni for some time. Their residence in Bznunik passed first to the Mamikoneans and then to the Bagratunis.

As a result, Theodoros united the Armenian nakharars under his rule, albeit for a short time, in the lands that could not be shared during the struggle for dominance between the Arabs and Byzantium, who came to the region after the fall of the Sassanids and provided a temporary stability in the region. As a result of Theodoros' policies, the first written agreement was signed between the Arabs and the Armenians, and this agreement was accepted with relatively more favourable conditions for the Armenians. Although the power struggles between the Armenian nakharars continued during the period when the Arabs arrived in the region, they could be controlled for a while with Theodoros' strategic moves. Thus, while the struggle between the two great powers continued in the region, Armenians were able to preserve both their existence and their faith in this chaotic environment.

---

44 Sebeos, p. 287.

45 Theodoros' body was brought to his own province and buried in the tomb of his fathers. See, Sebeos, p. 287.

**Bibliography:**

- A. Ter-Ġevondyan, “*Varazdirots Bagratuni*” Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran XI.
- Anonymous, “*Nerses G Tayetsi*” Ներսէս Գ Տայէցի”, Kırıstonya Hayastan Hanragitaran.
- Anonymous, “*Sparaped*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran XI.
- Anonymous, “*Mardastan*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran VII.
- Anonymous, “*Bznuniner*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran II.
- Anonymous, “*Kamsarakanner*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran V.
- Cinemre, İlhami Tekin. “Alliance with Hell: Romans vs Armenians and Arabs.” ARAMAZD: Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies 13, no. 2 (2019). <https://doi.org/10.32028/ajnes.v13i2.966>.
- Gevond, Gevond Badmutyun, Yerevan 1982.
- H. Acaryan “*Naharar*”, Hayeren Armatakan Bararan III.
- M. Katvalyan, “*Kogovit*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran V.
- Makrypoulias, Christos G. “The Arab Invasions and the Rise of the Bagratuni 640-884.” Cristo Raul, accessed October 9, 2024, <https://www.cristoraul.org/BYZANTIUM/The-Arab-Invasions-and-the-Rise-of-the-Bagratuni-640-884.pdf>.
- Preiser-Kapeller, Johannes. “Chapter 12 Aristocrats, Mercenaries, Clergymen and Refugees: Deliberate and Forced Mobility of Armenians in the Early Medieval Mediterranean (6th to 11th Century a.d.)”. In *Migration Histories of the Medieval Afroeurasian Transition Zone*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020) doi: [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004425613\\_013](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004425613_013)
- Sebeos, Sebeos Padmutyun (Translated by G. Khachadryan, V. Yediazaryan), Yerevan 2005.
- S. Yeremyan, “*Marzpan*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran VII.
- V. Vardanyan, “*Teodoros Rshduni*”, Haykakan Sovetakan Hanragitaran IV.



## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

**To cite this article:** Tağıyeva, Şahnaz. "Resettlement Policies and Regional Instability: Armenian Population as a Strategic Tool in the Caucasus" *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 50 (2024): 89-122.

**Received:** 13.03.2024

**Accepted:** 11.11.2024

# RESETTLEMENT POLICIES AND REGIONAL INSTABILITY: ARMENIAN POPULATION AS A STRATEGIC TOOL IN THE CAUCASUS

(İSKÂN POLİTİKALARI VE BÖLGESEL İSTİKRAR:  
KAFKASYA'DA STRATEJİK BİR ARAÇ OLARAK ERMENİ NÜFUSU)

Şahnaz TAĞİYEVA\*

**Abstract:** *The Caucasus has always been a region at the forefront of the attention of other states, characterized by a diverse population possessing rich civilizations and cultures. This region boasts a lengthy historical background. The favorable geographical position of the southern Caucasus and its abundant natural resources have consistently attracted the interest of major powers throughout history, occasionally transforming the region into an arena of contention.*

*The northern Caucasus, due to its complex ethnic composition, can be considered one of the most intricate regions globally. Consequently, relationships and tensions among the various ethnic groups living here are prioritized issues in the northern Caucasus.*

*While the majority of the population constitutes the indigenous inhabitants of the region, the demographic composition of the region has undergone*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-3751-0605>  
Researcher, Department of Georgian Studies, [georgianstudies@caucasusstudies.az](mailto:georgianstudies@caucasusstudies.az)

*changes due to recent migrations. Mutual migrations at the regional level, coupled with a deliberate increase in the number of diverse ethnic groups, have not only altered the ethnic composition but also disrupted the balance of power in the region.*

*The Armenians, one of the peoples residing in the Caucasus, are cognizant of the region's favorable environment. The territorial claims and separatist inclinations directly and indirectly asserted by representatives of this people, who were mass-migrated to the region at certain stages of history and artificially increased in number, contribute to conflicts and confrontations in the Caucasus.*

*In the presented article, the components of the Caucasus region, its population, the Armenians residing here, and their activities, as well as their settlements and separatist tendencies in these areas, have been elucidated. The article answers the question of how the historical resettlement policy of the state against the Armenian population in the Caucasus affected the ethnic balance and caused modern territorial conflicts in the region.*

**Keywords:** *Caucasus, South Caucasus, North Caucasus, Armenians, ethnic composition, conflicts.*

**Öz:** *Kafkasya, zengin uygarlıklara ve kültürlerle sahip, çok çeşitli bir nüfusla karakterize edilen, her zaman diğer devletlerin dikkatinin ön planda olduğu bir bölge olmuştur. Bu bölge uzun bir tarihi geçmişe sahiptir. Güney Kafkasya'nın elverişli coğrafi konumu ve zengin doğal kaynakları, tarih boyunca sürekli olarak büyük güçlerin ilgisini çekmiş, zaman zaman bölgeyi bir çekişme alanına dönüştürmüştür.*

*Kuzey Kafkasya, karmaşık etnik yapısı nedeniyle dünya çapında en karmaşık bölgelerden biri olarak kabul edilebilir. Dolayısıyla burada yaşayan çeşitli etnik gruplar arasındaki ilişkiler ve gerginlikler Kuzey Kafkasya'da öncelikli konular arasında yer alıyor.*

*Nüfusun çoğunluğunu bölgenin yerli halkı oluştururken, son yıllarda yaşanan göçler nedeniyle bölgenin demografik yapısı da değişime uğramıştır. Bölgesel düzeydeki karşılıklı göçler, çeşitli etnik grupların sayısındaki kasıtlı artışla birleştiğinde, yalnızca etnik yapıyı değiştirmekle kalmamış, aynı zamanda bölgedeki güç dengesini de bozmuştur.*

*Kafkasya'da yaşayan halklardan biri olan Ermeniler, bölgenin elverişli ortamının bilincindedir. Tarihin belli dönemlerinde bölgeye kitlesel olarak göç eden ve sayıları yapay olarak artan bu halkın temsilcilerinin doğrudan*

*ve dolaylı olarak öne sürdüğü toprak iddiaları ve ayrılıkçı eğilimler; Kafkasya'daki çatışma ve çatışmaların koşullarını yaratmaktadır.*

*Sunulan makalede Kafkasya bölgesinin bileşenleri, nüfusu, burada yaşayan Ermeniler ve faaliyetleri ile bu bölgelerdeki yerleşimleri ve ayrılıkçı eğilimleri aydınlatılmıştır. Makalede, devletin Kafkasya'daki Ermeni nüfusuna yönelik tarihi iskân politikasının etnik dengeyi nasıl etkilediği ve bölgede günümüzde toprak çatışmalarına nasıl yol açtığı sorusuna cevap verilmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Kafkasya, Güney Kafkasya, Kuzey Kafkasya, Ermeniler, etnik yapı, çatışmalar.

## Introduction

The Caucasus is a geographical and socio-historical region divided into Northern Caucasus and Southern Caucasus, covering an area of 440 thousand square kilometers.

Northern Caucasus stretches from the Caspian Sea in the east, the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov in the west, the Manych River and its marshes in the north, to the point where the Samur River flows into the Caspian Sea in the south-east and the Inguri River flows into the Black Sea in the south-west.

Southern Caucasus, on the other hand, is located south of the Greater Caucasus Mountains, comprising territories of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia.

Since ancient times, the Caucasus has been subjected to migrations of various peoples. Situated between Europe and Asia, the Caucasus has witnessed invasions by Persians, Huns, Mongols, Arabs, Russians, and others.

Historical sources indicate that the state of Armenia did not exist in the Caucasus, and Armenians migrated from the Balkan Peninsula to Eastern Anatolia (Asia Minor), then to Southern Caucasus, including the modern territory of Georgia. The ancient Greek historian Herodotus, in his work "Histories," described the inhabitants of Asia Minor as descendants of the Phrygians, stating that they were a branch of the Phrygian tribes who migrated to Asia Minor, settling in the mountainous country at the sources of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.

The distinguished Russian scholar I.M. Dyakonov also wrote that Armenians not only came to Southern Caucasus but also "searched for their homeland" in Asia Minor. He classified the Armenian language as belonging to the Indo-European language group and confirmed that Armenians are not related to the Hurrian-Urartian, Hittite, modern Caucasian languages, or Semitic languages. The presence of Armenians in the Caucasus during the Middle Ages was primarily for trade purposes. Additionally, they were brought as slaves and used for menial labor by the indigenous Turkic and Georgian rulers.

After the complete occupation of the Caucasus by Tsarist Russia, the purposeful resettlement of the Armenian population began. This process began at the beginning of the 19th century, accelerated at the end of the 19th century, and continued during the Soviet period. The policy of transferring the Armenian population to the Caucasus by Tsarist Russia had a serious effect on the change of the ethnic balance in the region and the occurrence of modern territorial conflicts. This process consisted of two main stages. In the 19th century, especially after 1828, the Russian Empire encouraged the resettlement

of the Armenian population living in present-day Iran and the Ottoman Empire. This relocation was mainly carried out for strategic purposes. In the south of the Caucasus, especially in the southern regions of present-day Armenia and Azerbaijan, the number of Armenians increased and the ethnic landscape of the region changed. The central government purposefully carried out a resettlement policy in order to create an ethnic base in the South Caucasus and increase the number of the Christian population. The relocation of Armenians to the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the presence of other ethnic groups caused ethnic tensions in the region. This, in particular, paved the way for the beginning of the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, since 1988, ethnic conflicts began in Karabakh. The presence of Armenians in the region became one of the main factors of this conflict. These displacements further confused the ethnic composition of the area and made it difficult to resolve the conflict. The relocation of the Armenian population to the Caucasus had a serious impact on the ethnic and political balance in the region.

### **1. Armenians in the North Caucasus**

The North Caucasus region, with its favorable geographical position and valuable mineral reserves, has consistently been a focal point of attention. The region includes Adygea, Ingushetia, Chechnya, Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, North Ossetia-Alania Republic, as well as the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories, all of which are part of the Russian Federation. Covering an area of 258.3 thousand square kilometers and a population of 14.8 million, it is the most diverse region in Russia. The presence of fertile soils, favorable climatic conditions, valuable mineral resources, and its economic-geographical position have contributed to the economic development of the North Caucasus.

The North Caucasus has a complex ethnic composition, hosting various nations such as Avars, Circassians, Azerbaijanis, Balkars, Dargins, Ingush, Karachays, Kumyks, Lezgins, Nogais, Ossetians, Russians, Chechens, Rutuls, Udi, Armenians, and others.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, the social-economic situation in the North Caucasus was challenging, and political stability was lacking. To address these issues, the Russians sought to create favorable conditions by granting privileges to various ethnic groups living in the North Caucasus. Looking back in history, in the 18th century, Russian Tsar Peter I considered Armenians as allies in wars against the Ottoman Empire and Iran. The intention was to utilize Armenians in pursuing a Machiavellian policy aimed at occupying the Caucasus and

eliminating a significant portion of the Muslim-Turkic population. Catherine I, in 1768, utilized Armenians against the Turks when initiating military actions.<sup>1</sup>

Armenians believed they could establish an “Armenian Kingdom” in the territory between Iran and the Ottoman Empire with the support of the Russian Empire. However, the Russian government began a policy of Russification in the occupied territories, thwarting the Armenians’ desire for a “Greater Armenia.”

Starting from 1778, Armenians were resettled to Crimea by the Russian Empire, facilitating the unification of Crimea with Russia and strengthening its influence in the North Caucasus. The Russian Empire thus took advantage of Armenians to resolve issues in the region.

The influx of Armenians into the North Caucasus occurred mainly in the 19th and 20th centuries. During this period, Armenians migrated from the Ottoman Empire to the Black Sea coast of the North Caucasus. Many settled in the former Adyghe-Cherkess territory. In the early 19th century, a significant number of Armenians arrived in the Stavropol region and established the town of Edessa. In the late 1800s to the early 1900s, 46% of Armenians settled in the North Caucasus region, while the remaining 39% migrated to Krasnodar during the Soviet and post-Soviet eras. After the fall of the Soviet Union, Armenians in the Krasnodar region became the second-largest ethnic group after Russians.

### 1.1. Armenians in the Republic of Adyghea

One of the Northern Caucasus republics with the most compact Armenian population is the Republic of Adyghea. Adyghea is a subject of the Russian Federation and constitutes a republic within its structure, with its capital being the city of Maykop. The republic’s territory is surrounded on all sides by the Krasnodar Territory, covering an area of 7,792 km<sup>2</sup>.

Adyghea is an agrarian-industrial country, and it is rich in various valuable mineral deposits. The majority of industrial enterprises in the country are concentrated in Maykop. In the Maykop region, there are oil and gas deposits, as well as mineral springs. The local extractive industries, forestry, and agricultural products primarily contribute to the creation of diverse industrial activities.

---

1 Toksoy,A. XIX. Yüzyılda Rusya’nın Kafkas Politikası ve Ermeniler. 04.04.2014, <http://ekoavryasya.net/duyuru.aspx?did=136&Lang=TR>

The Adygeans (Adyghe or Circassians) predominantly reside in 45 villages, as well as in the city of Maykop and the towns of Enem, Yablonovsky, and Tlyustenkhable. They are most densely populated in the Taxtamukaysk, Koshexable, Teuchezhsk, Shovgenovsk, Koshexable, and Krasnoqvardeysk districts. Adygea Republic is home to various ethnic groups, including Adyghe, Circassians, Kurds, Azerbaijanis, Russians, Ukrainians, Armenians, Tatars, Uzbeks, Avars, Ossetians, and others.

Based on statistical data for the year 2023, the total population of the Republic of Adygea in this autonomous region of the Russian Federation was 497,985 people. Within the republic, the Russian population accounted for 287,800 individuals, while Armenians constituted 14,800 individuals. Armenians in Maykop city are actively engaged in various fields and professions.<sup>2</sup>

In the 19th century, the ethnic group known as the Central Armenians formed in this region. They are a branch of Armenians who migrated among the Northern Caucasus peoples. Currently, they are primarily concentrated in the capital, Maykop. The Armenians residing here are mainly involved in trade, craftsmanship, and industrial sectors. In 2015, there were around 5,000 Armenians living in Maykop, working in various government agencies, agriculture, and as entrepreneurs.

Central Armenians, living alongside Circassians, have assimilated their customs, clothing, culinary traditions, and language, while preserving their religious identity. Although their initial language was Armenian, historical processes led to the loss of this language, replaced by the Adyghe language. The reason for adopting the Adyghe language as their own is explained by the close interaction with Circassians in various aspects of public life. This interaction is prominently evident in economic, social, family, and cultural spheres.

The prevalence of Central cultural elements in the Central Armenian community is attributed, in part, to the frequent intermarriages between Central Armenians and Circassians. It's worth noting that the strongest factor preventing the complete assimilation of Adyghe Armenians is their membership in the Armenian Gregorian (Orthodox) Church. Representatives of the local Adyghe community in Adygea celebrate Armenian holidays. The significance of these celebrations lies in the emergence of vivid emotions and the strengthening of family traditions through national rituals.<sup>3</sup>

---

2 Численность постоянного населения Российской Федерации по муниципальным образованиям на 1 января 2023 года (с учётом итогов Всероссийской переписи населения 2020 г.). Федеральная служба государственной статистики. 18.08.2023.

3 Кочеткова. С., Армяне Адыгеи народными гуляньями отмечают древний праздник Терендез. 13.02.2012, <https://www.yuga.ru/news/253542/>



## 1.2. Armenians in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria

Another region where Armenians reside is the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria. It is bordered by the Karachay-Cherkess Republic to the west, Stavropol Territory to the north, North Ossetia-Alania Republic to the east and southeast, and shares a southern border with Georgia. Established on September 1, 1921, as the Kabardian Autonomous Region, it was later transformed into the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Region on January 16, 1922, and finally became the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic on December 5, 1936. Since 1992, it has been known as the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria, with its capital in the city of Nalchik. The republic covers an area of 12.5 thousand square kilometers.

Kabardino-Balkaria is a developed region with a diversified industrial sector and highly intensive agriculture. Its industrial activities include non-ferrous metallurgy, machine-building and metal processing, food production, chemicals, construction materials, and wood processing. The non-ferrous metallurgy industry is primarily based on tungsten-molybdenum ore deposits. The automotive transportation sector is the most advanced within various transportation types, while railway transportation is also progressing.

According to the statistical data for the year 2023, the population of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria is 904,338 people. The ethnic composition is as follows: 56% Kabardins, 22% Russians, 12% Balkars, 0.45% Armenians, and others.<sup>4</sup>

In the Republic, the number of Balkar Turks is slightly over 90 thousand. The Balkars endured the bloody deportation during the Second World War and could only return to their homeland in the 1950s.

The main part of the Armenian diaspora is concentrated in the city of Nalchik. In 2001, the regional branch of the Russian Armenians Union was established based on the “Axpury” national cultural center. This organization brings together ethnic Armenians born in the region, as well as immigrants from Armenia and other countries. In September 2018, the activities of the Armenian Sunday School, where members of the diaspora can learn the Armenian language and familiarize themselves with national culture, literature, and fine arts, were restored in Nalchik.

---

4 Численность постоянного населения Российской Федерации по муниципальным образованиям на 1 января 2023 года (с учётом итогов Всероссийской переписи населения 2020 г.). Федеральная служба государственной статистики 18.08.2023

For an extended period, Jirayr Shavarshovich Ioannisyan led the Kabardino-Balkar division of the Russian Armenians Union. Since 2014, Artur Poghosyan has been the president of this public organization.<sup>5</sup>

The foreign trade relations between the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic and the Republic of Armenia are experiencing mutual development. The Republic of Armenia is traditionally one of the leading trade and economic partners for companies in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria. In 2011, the total trade turnover was only 0.03 million US dollars, but in 2012, the volume of export-import operations increased, reaching 0.16 million US dollars. In 2013, the volume of foreign trade turnover decreased again, amounting to 0.09 million US dollars. However, during the first 9 months of 2016, a significant increase of 0.92 million dollars was observed in foreign trade turnover. In 2022, the foreign trade turnover of Kabardino-Balkaria with Armenia has doubled compared to 2021.

One of the most relevant areas of Russian-Armenian cooperation is tourism and recreation. According to Rosstat, Armenia ranks 9th in the ranking of the most popular countries among Russian tourists. By the end of 2022, more than 780 thousand Russian tourists have come to Armenia.

Kabardino-Balkaria also collaborates with Armenia in the humanitarian field. In June 2012, students from Armenia participated in the international festival “Student Spring in the Caucasus,” held in Kabardino-Balkaria, aimed at bringing together youth from the member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) to promote creativity and intellectual exchange.<sup>6</sup>

### **1.3. Armenians in Karachay-Circassian Republic**

One of the diverse republics in the region is the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, which is a subject of the Russian Federation. Administratively, it is part of the North Caucasus Federal District. The capital city is Cherkessk, and the republic’s territory spans 14,277 square kilometers. The population of the republic exceeds 469,000.

---

5 Кабардино-Балкарское региональное отделение общероссийской организации Союза армян России «Ахбюр». İstifadə tarixi: 10.03.2024, <https://nalchik.bezformata.com/listnews/kabardino-balkarskoe-regionalnoe/70795926>

6 Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации. О сотрудничестве субъектов Северо[15]-Кавказского федерального округа с республикой Армения. 20.02.2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/economic\\_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/economic_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690/)

Approximately 80% of the republic's territory is mountainous, with Mount Elbrus, the highest peak in the Caucasus, situated here. The republic is rich in water resources, boasting 130 glacial lakes and 172 rivers, contributing to its diverse landscape. Karachay-Cherkess Republic is primarily an agrarian country, with key sectors in agriculture including chemical and petrochemical, as well as food and textile industries. Agriculture and animal husbandry are pivotal areas within the agricultural sector of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic.

The republic is home to representatives of more than 80 different ethnic groups, with the Karachays constituting 60% of the population.<sup>7</sup> According to the 2018 geographical distribution statistics in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, approximately 700,000 Cherkess live in the region. The diaspora consists of around 6-7 million Cherkess, and nearly 95% of them are estimated to reside in Turkey.<sup>8</sup>

According to the information from the Republic Statistics Committee, there are more than 3,000 Armenians living in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic. The majority of Armenians in this region migrated from the territory of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries.<sup>9</sup>

In the capital city of the republic, Cherkessk, the Surb Gevorg Apostol Church has been built.<sup>10</sup> According to information from the editorial office of the Armenian-Russian newspaper "Yerkramas," the Armenian community in Cherkessk initiated the construction of the church in 2005, and the church was built based on the contributions of its members.<sup>11</sup>

The main direction of mutual relations between the Karachay-Cherkess Republic and Armenia is in the fields of culture, education, and art. In July

7 Официальный сайт Главы и Правительства Карачаево-Черкесской Республики: Общие данные о Карачаево-Черкессии. Accessed: 20.02.2024, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&ret=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwisvIrYqOyEAXUWcPEDHYqMCa8QFnoECBYQAQ&url=http%3A%2F%2Fpravo.gov.ru%2Flinks%2Fkarachaevo%2F&usq=AOvVaw0sq2PMqSlgcjIkuYhbsEv&opi=89978449>

8 Кабардино-Балкарское региональное отделение общероссийской организации Союза армян России «Ахбюр». Accessed: 01.03.2014, <https://nalchik.bezformata.com/listnews/kabardino-balkarskoe-regionalnoe/70795926/>

9 Balancar F. 1864'ten günümüze Çerkesler ve Ermeniler, 26.02.2018, <https://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/20266/1864ten-gunumuze-cherkesler-ve-ermeniler>

10 Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации. О сотрудничестве субъектов Северо-Кавказского федерального округа с республикой Армения. 20.02.2017, [https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/economic\\_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/economic_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690)

11 Tasam, Kafkasya'da Bir Ülke: Çeçenistan. 21.06.2011, [https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/2213/kafkasyada\\_bir\\_ulke\\_cecenistan/](https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/2213/kafkasyada_bir_ulke_cecenistan/)

2012, representatives from Armenia participated in the “Dombay-2012” III Caucasus Forum of Russian (Eurasian) Youth, discussing the issues and perspectives of the Eurasian Union. In November 2012, representatives of science and art from Armenia participated in the international scientific-practical conference “Ancient Times in Modern Art” held at the special Astrophysical Observatory of the Russian Academy of Sciences in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic.<sup>12</sup>

#### **1.4. Armenians in the Chechen Republic**

The Chechen Republic, situated approximately 100 kilometers from the Caspian Sea in the Northern Caucasus, is part of the Russian Federation. It is bordered to the northwest by Stavropol, to the east and south by Dagestan and Georgia, and to the west by Ingushetia. The capital city of the republic is Grozny. The territory of the republic covers 15.3 thousand square kilometers. Despite its industrial production being 1.4 times greater than current agricultural production, the economic stability of Chechnya was severely disrupted in the 1990s due to the conflicts that took place during that period.

The economy began to actively develop in the early 2000s. According to the information for the year 2019, Chechnya's Gross Regional Product (GRP) growth rate was 2.5%. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Chechen-Ingush Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic split into two entities: the Republic of Ingushetia and the newly independent Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Following the first war, Chechnya de facto gained independence as the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria. Russian federal control was restored during the Second Russo-Chechen War.

According to Rosstat, the population of the republic is 1,533,209 people.<sup>13</sup>

In the year 1897, there were only 339 Armenians living in the Grozny district of the Russian Empire, constituting 0.2% of the region's population. However, by 1939, Chechnya already had a population of 8,170 Armenians, representing 1.5% of the total population. In 1959, the Armenian community in this region reached 12,136 individuals, constituting 2% of the overall population of the autonomous republic.

---

12 Многоголосая культура народов Кабардино-Балкарии, İstifadə tarixi 20.02.2024, <https://гнбкбр.рф/wp-content/uploads/proects/culture/ethnos/armenians/overview.html>

13 Численность населения по полу по субъектам Российской Федерации на 1 января 2022 года (с учётом итогов Всероссийской переписи населения 2020 г.). Федеральная служба государственной статистики 30.12.2022.

During the early 20th century, Grozny had a significant Armenian community with its own school, church, and even a theater. In the 1920s, one of the key figures in the creation of the Chechen autonomy, which centered around Grozny, was Anastas Mikoyan, who was the People's Commissar for Nationalities at the time.

The Soviet People's Commissariat issued a resolution on November 21, 1945, regarding the return of Armenians living abroad to Soviet Armenia. Subsequently, on February 22, 1946, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party, in collaboration with the Soviet People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, adopted a resolution on "measures for the return of Armenians from abroad to Soviet Armenia."<sup>14</sup>

In the city of Grozny, trade houses from Armenia, such as "Georgiy Pitoyev," "Lazar Mailov and Sons," have been established and are actively operating. These establishments deal in explosives, oil equipment, industrial goods, and more. Armenian mining engineers, technologists, and mechanics played a significant role in the oil industry of Grozny. They held responsible positions in various organizations. Until 1919, about 75% of mining engineers and technical workers in Grozny were of Armenian origin. Therefore, Armenian capital contributed to the development of the Grozny oil industry complex.

### 1.5. Armenians in the Republic of Dagestan

Dağistan, a multi-ethnic region within the Russian Federation, is also home to Armenians. Dağistan is a federal subject of Russia, part of the North Caucasus Federal District. It shares borders with Azerbaijan to the south, Georgia to the southwest, Chechnya to the west, Stavropol Krai to the northwest, and the Republic of Kalmykia to the north. The capital city of the republic is Makhachkala, and its total area is 50,270 square kilometers.

Dağistan has a diverse economy with a focus on agriculture and industry. The agricultural complexes play a leading role in the production of food, textiles, and machinery. The region is also rich in various natural resources, with deposits of valuable minerals and oil and gas reserves discovered in places like Izberbash and Terek-Kumek.

As of January 1, 2013, according to available information, the permanent population of the Republic of Dagestan is 2,946,303 people. Out of this total, 1,328,915 reside in urban areas, while 1,617,388 people live in rural areas.

---

14 Армяне хотели заселить Чечню: российский историк опубликовал рассекреченные документы. 03.04.2019, <https://minval.az>

If you have any further questions or need additional information, feel free to ask.<sup>15</sup>

The Republic of Dagestan is administratively divided into 42 districts, with over 100 ethnic groups residing in the region. Among these, 30 are indigenous peoples, including Nogais, Tabasarans, Avars, Dargins, Lezgins, Aguls, Kumyks, Tats, and others. Azerbaijanis living in Dagestan are among the ancient peoples of the region. In Xasavyurt, located in the western part of Dagestan, and its surrounding areas, approximately 70,000 Chechens reside. The diverse composition of the population in Dagestan reveals distinctions in language, religion, and clothing among the various ethnic groups.

As of the 2010 census, there are around five thousand Armenians living in Dagestan. The major cities of Makhachkala, Derbent, and Kizlyar host significant ethnic communities.<sup>16</sup>

Dağıstan has been one of the republics affected by Armenian terrorism, specifically through the actions of the “Armenian Secret Liberation Army” (ASOA) and the “Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia” (ASALA).<sup>17</sup> These organizations committed terrorist acts in Dagestan as well as in different regions.

In the vicinity of Xasavyurt railway station in the Dağıstan Republic of the Russian Federation, a passenger train of the “Moscow-Baku” route was bombed on May 30, 1991, resulting in 11 fatalities and 22 injuries. On June 31 of the same year, near the Temirtau station in the Dağıstan Republic, another “Moscow-Baku” passenger train was bombed, resulting in 16 deaths and 20 injuries.

On February 2, 2013, an explosion occurred in the “Shehristan” hotel-resort complex, owned by Azerbaijanis, located in the center of Derbent. A bomb planted in a car exploded at the entrance of the hotel. Although there were no reported fatalities, three people were injured, with one in critical condition.

In the center of Makhachkala, on July 13, 2014, a terrorist incident resulted in 35 deaths, and nearly 100 peaceful residents were injured. Following the investigation, five individuals were arrested.

---

15 Ermənistan-Azərbaycan münəqışəsi. İstifadə tarixi: 09.03.2024.  
<https://president.az/az/pages/view/azerbaijan/karabakh>

16 Численность постоянного населения Российской Федерации по муниципальным образованиям на 1 января 2023 года (с учётом итогов Всероссийской переписи населения 2020 г.). Федеральная служба государственной статистики. 18.08.2023

17 Erməni terrorizmi, <https://azerbaijan.az/related-information/120>

Looking at the year 2017, during that period, Dağıstan experienced 531 incidents of a terrorist nature. This information was presented by Abdurashid Magomedov, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Dağıstan, during a parliamentary session.

It should be noted that the terrorist acts of Armenian terrorists (ASOA) and terrorist organizations (ASALA) in Dagestan resulted in the death and injury of hundreds of people. The Minister of Internal Affairs of Dagestan, Abdurashid Magomedov, noted that in 2017, 40 militants were eliminated, 312 fighters and their associates were detained, and 19 individuals surrendered voluntarily. Additionally, the security forces in Dagestan eradicated six terrorist-diversion groups in the republic.

Armenian cultural figures declare Dağıstan as their historical homeland, promoting integration into the cultural sphere of the region under the guise of integration. The forced policies and terrorism initiated by Armenians in Dağıstan since the early 1990s have, in recent times (2012-2015), transitioned towards ideological and cultural terrorism. During these years, it is important to mention acts such as the explosion of trains and railway lines, as well as the explosions in the “Şəhristan” hotel complex in the center of Derbent. Armenians are implicated in all these crimes against humanity. Dağıstan is considered the battleground for a hidden war, as daily incidents of public unrest occur in the region.

### **1.6. Armenians in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania**

The Republic of North Ossetia-Alania, one of the subjects of the Russian Federation, is part of the North Caucasus Federal District. Its capital is Vladikavkaz, and its territory covers 8,000 square kilometers with a population of 693,098 people. Established as the North Ossetian Autonomous Oblast on July 7, 1924, it was later renamed the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in 1991. The region's predominant sector in the economic complex is heavy industry, with non-ferrous metallurgy, mining, and machine-building contributing three-quarters of the total production.

Similar to other regions, Armenians have settled in North Ossetia-Alania, considering it their homeland. According to the 2017 statistics, there were around 19,000 Armenians living in North Ossetia-Alania.<sup>18</sup>

The process of forming Armenian communities continued into the 19th century. Due to the influx of Armenians, especially to the southern regions of Russia,

---

<sup>18</sup> Северная Осетия, 30.11.2017, <https://moyaokrug.ru/sevosetia/Articles.aspx?articleId=133629>



old Armenian communities merged and new ones were established, leading to a significant increase in the number of Armenian communities. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, changes occurred in the social and cultural life of Armenian communities in Russia. During those years, there was an unseen flow of Armenians to Russia.

The city of Vladikavkaz hosts the largest Armenian diaspora in the region. The establishment of a church for Armenians in Vladikavkaz dates back to the 19th century, known as the Church of Saint Gregory the Illuminator. In the early 20th century, a new church was constructed, and its consecration ceremony took place with great solemnity. This church not only served as a place of worship but also became a venue for community discussions on important matters. By the end of the 19th century, the Armenian population in Vladikavkaz had reached 1,700.

In the early 20th century, the Terek region became a significant settlement for Armenians. Until November 1920, the Armenian community in this region consisted of around 12,000 individuals.

Armenians actively participate in the social-political and socio-economic life of North Ossetia and work in various positions in various fields of the national economy. In Vladikavkaz, about 8% of the Armenian community's trading posts are mainly managed by Armenians and Persians.<sup>19</sup> As early as the 1840s, Armenian merchants were engaged in trade in cloth and food products in the city of Mozdok in North Ossetia-Alania. The Armenian community in the city of Mozdok is actively engaged in trade and crafts, and operates in the region by building churches, schools, and workshops. The Armenian diaspora in Mozdok region is also active.

### **1.7. Armenians in Krasnodar Territory**

The Krasnodar Krai is located in the western part of the Greater Caucasus and in the Kuban-Azov transit plain. The eastern part of the region extends toward the Stavropol elevation. Krasnodar Krai covers an area of 83.6 thousand square kilometers, with a population of 5 million people. Approximately 54% of the total population resides in urban areas, resulting in a population density of 66 people per square kilometer. The main cities include Krasnodar, Sochi, Novorossiysk, Armavir, and Eysk.<sup>20</sup>

---

19 Северная Осетия. 29.12.2002, <https://moyaokruga.ru/sevosetia/Articles.aspx?articleId=422324>

20 Açma B., Yenişen K. Kafkasya'nın ekonomik potansiyeli ve dönüşümü için politika ve stratejiler // yönetim ve ekonomi. Cild 20. Türkiye, Celal Bayar ün-si, 2013, s.132-149.

Its industry includes food processing, machinery manufacturing, construction materials, and more. Large quantities of sugar, vegetable oil, and canned goods are produced. Mountain rivers are abundant in hydroenergy resources. The region possesses reserves of oil, gas, and construction materials. Krasnodar is Russia's main agricultural region, specializing in wheat, sunflowers, and rice cultivation. The transportation infrastructure is well-developed, featuring major ports such as Novorossiysk and Tuapse. Based on the 2002 census, approximately 275,000 Armenians were living in this area. This figure constitutes about 24.3% of the total Armenian population in the Russian Federation<sup>21</sup> (in 2010, there were over 1.7 million Armenians living in the Russian Federation, with more than 1.182 million being Russian citizens and 515,000 being citizens of Armenia).<sup>22</sup>

After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Krasnodar Krai became one of the regions where Armenians migrated. There was an observed influx of Armenians from Abkhazia and Chechnya to Krasnodar Krai. Since the mid-1990s, a significant number of Armenians left Armenia, mainly due to harsh economic conditions. Other Armenian migrants in the North-Western Caucasus came from Kazakhstan, Central Asia, and Georgia. Armenian migrants settled along the Black Sea coast, in the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions, and surrounding areas. Armenians preferred migrating to the Kuban region to maintain close family and friendship ties with the large diaspora living far beyond the region's borders.

The migration of Armenians to the territories of Krasnodar and Stavropol has contributed to their historical reinterpretations. The Armenians' objective is to consolidate their power in these lands and completely marginalize the local population, especially Russians and representatives of other ethnic groups. The Armenian massacres in the Ottoman territory (1915), the declaration of war on Georgia (a two-week war in December 1918), and the processes that started against Azerbaijan (in the Nagorno-Karabakh region since 1988) give reason to say this.

Russian Caucasian scholar I.N. Kanadeev noted that the Caucasian peoples must protect themselves from the pernicious influence of the Armenians. Because their separatism leads to Armenian autonomy, even to the creation of Armenian statehood, which has never existed in the Caucasus.<sup>23</sup>

---

21 Açma B.,Yenişen K. Kafkasya'nın ekonomik potansiyeli ve dönüşümü için politika ve stratejiler // yönetim ve ekonomi. Cild 20. Türkiye, Celal Bayar ün-si, 2013, s.132-149.

22 Национальный состав Российской Федерации. Информационные материалы об окончательных итогах Всероссийской переписи населения, 2010 года/[http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/ perepis2010/ perepis\\_ itogi 1612.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/ perepis2010/ perepis_ itogi 1612.htm)

23 Канадеев И.Н. Указ.паб., с. 5- 33.

Many Armenian scholars and historians of Armenian descent note that Armenians lived in the Krasnodar, Stavropol, and Rostov regions long before the Russians and other local ethnic groups. Armenians in the southern part of the Russian Federation have already chosen the city of Armavir in the Krasnodar region as their “capital.” This city shares the same name as the city of Armavir in Armenia.

Armenians in the aforementioned regions of the Russian Federation have formed an organization called the “Krasnodar Armenian Republic.” It is essential to pay attention to the assertiveness and self-confidence of the members and founders of this organization

As evident from the organization’s name, a neutral term has not been chosen, openly indicating their territorial claims towards the Russian region. The establishment of branches of this organization in Stavropol and Rostov is also not an exception.

Armenians claim that, supposedly since the time of the “Great Armenian” King Tigran, they have been living in the south of Russia up to the present day. They not only convince themselves of this fabricated idea but even manage to persuade some Russians. By distorting historical facts, Armenians attempt to assert that they were the first settlers in these lands and even try to affirm that these territories are their ancestral lands.

The Krasnodar region plays a significant role as a lucrative market for Armenians. In 2015, to support business interests and rights in Kuban, the Kuban Entrepreneurs Union was established in Krasnodar. The union includes businessmen from various fields (ranging from tourism and restaurant business to manufacturing industries). In many industrial sectors, Armenian businessmen hold management positions.

### **1.8. Armenians in Stavropol Territory**

The Stavropol region covers an area of 66.5 thousand square kilometers with a population of 2.7 million people. It was established on February 13, 1924, as the Southeastern Province. From October 16, 1924, until March 13, 1937, it was known as the North Caucasus region, and from March 13, 1937, until January 12, 1943, it was recognized as the Orconikidze region. Currently, it is referred to as the Stavropol region. The Stavropol region is the center of the North Caucasus macro-region, which is a strategically important geostrategic area for ensuring the territorial integrity and state security of the country.<sup>24</sup>

---

24 Стратегия социально-экономического развития Ставропольского края до /2035года/<https://economy.gov.ru/material/file/2be4c8d2cabdb0ce884b047834a7540f/210119sk.pdf>

In this region, agriculture is specialized in crop farming and sheep breeding. Large herds of sheep, highly regarded for their wool, occupy a prominent place in the Russian Federation. Irrigation is being developed, allowing the cultivation of vegetables and garden crops on these lands. The transportation network is well-established, featuring pipelines, automobiles, and air transport. According to statistical data from 1979, there were 40,000 Armenians living in the Stavropol region. By 2010, their number had increased fourfold, reaching 161,324 individuals. According to official information, Armenians constitute 6% of the region's total population. Unofficial sources suggest that there are approximately 300,000 to 400,000 Armenians in the Stavropol region, comprising 11% to 15% of the local population.<sup>25</sup>

Armenians constitute the second-largest population in Stavropol after the Slavic community. They can be encountered in significant numbers in Stavropol, Pyatigorsk, and other residential areas of the region.

Various Armenian groups on digital platforms publish fabricated articles about the “ancient” Armenian settlements in the Krasnodar and Stavropol regions of the Russian Federation. These articles create a fictitious historical foundation for such territories. Armenians claim to have been present in the Stavropol region since the 12th century. According to their assertions, they have two major residential areas in the Stavropol region.

One of these areas is the city of Budyonnovsk in the eastern part of the region (originally named Surb-Khach in Armenian, meaning Holy Cross). The other is the large village of Edissiya (supposedly named after the Armenian city of Edessa) located near the border with Chechnya. Currently, Armenians make up almost 90% of the population in Edissiya.

## 2. Armenians in the South Caucasus

In the 7th century, the southern part of the Caucasus witnessed the spread of Islam with the conquest of the region by the Caliphate. Subsequently, after being under the rule of the Seljuks, Mongols, and various Turkic tribes, the area came under the leadership of the Safavid state in 1501. Until the mid-18th century, the region remained under the sovereignty of the Safavid state. Independent Turkic khanates were established in the southern part of the South Caucasus in 1747 after the assassination of Nader Shah Afshar. Following Nader Shah's death in 1747, the territory of what is today Azerbaijan was

---

25 Цифры предоставлены А.Е. Тер-Саркисянцем, Российская академия наук.  
Интервью Хьюман Райтс Вотч, Москва, 1996 г.,  
<http://www.omri.cz/Elections/Russia/Regions/About/Stavropol.html>

divided among various khanates. Afterward, the interest of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus grew.

As a result of two Russo-Persian wars in the early 19th century, the entire South Caucasus was completely occupied by the Russian Empire. Subsequently, in the 19th century, Armenians began to migrate to Georgia. Tsarist Russia desired the placement of Armenians in the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom. The presence of Armenians in Georgia would, in theory, be advantageous for the Tsar, as they would be loyal to him and help defend the country. Therefore, the existence of Armenians in Georgia would serve the Tsarist political agenda. After the dissolution of the Kartli-Kakheti kingdom, Armenians started claiming that the part of Georgia up to Qori was supposedly the “historical lands of Armenians.” However, the South Caucasus and Georgia were not historically the homeland of Armenians. They were not indigenous to the region but settled there at various times. Armenians played a significant role in suppressing the uprisings against colonial rule and the abolition of the Georgian kingdom

## **2.1. Armenians in the Republic of Armenia**

The Republic of Armenia is one of the three states located in the South Caucasus. The country borders Turkey to the west, Georgia to the north, and Azerbaijan to the east and south. The capital is Yerevan.

Regarding the formation of the Armenian ethnic group, Armenian authors assert its connection to the eastern part of Anatolia and the “Hayas country.” According to them, Armenians originated outside the Caucasus, specifically in the eastern part of Asia Minor, and had difficulties establishing their roots in the region, alongside tribes of uncertain Balkan origin that were supposedly part of the Hayas tribal alliance. They claim that Armenians appropriated the self-designation “hay” among other things.<sup>26</sup>

Until the relocation of the Armenian Catholicosate center to the Ararat region (Chukhur Saad) in 1441, there were no specific villages or land areas exclusively owned by Armenians within the present territory of the Republic of Armenia. Even the village of Uchkilsa (Valarshabad), where the Armenian Catholicosate was located, was gradually acquired by Armenians through various means from Azerbaijani Turks starting from the year 1443.<sup>27</sup>

During the First Russo-Persian War of 1804-1813, the Iravan Khanate faced two attacks by Russian forces but managed to resist and maintain its

---

26 Qasımlı M., Öməröv V., Məmmədova N., Həbibbəyli S., Salayev K., Gürcüstanda erməni təşkilatlarının fəaliyyəti (XIX əsr – XXI əsrin əvvəlləri), Bakı: 2020, 606 s.

27 M. Yaqub., “İrəvan xanlığı”, <https://mod.gov.az/az/irevan-tarixi-410/>

independence. Tsarist Russia, with the aim of annexing the Iravan Khanate, successfully achieved its goal with the assistance of the Armenians living in the region. The Russian army, besieging the fortress of Iravan, received information from Armenians about the location of Azerbaijani forces within the fortress and the directions to deploy artillery fire. Consequently, in 1827, Tsarist Russia captured the Iravan Khanate, triggering mass migrations of Armenians into the khanate's territory.<sup>28</sup>

In the years 1828-1832, there were a total of 1,111 settlements in the Armenian province, with only 62 villages being inhabited by local Armenians. In the remaining 1,069 villages, Azerbaijani Turks were the residents.<sup>29</sup>

Starting from the 1820s and 1830s, Tsarist Russia, through the resettlement of Armenians, altered the traditional ethnic, political, and religious landscape of the South Caucasus, particularly the Azerbaijani territories in the region. A new Christian ethnic group was established in the borderlands of Northern Azerbaijan with Iran and the Ottoman Empire. In 1911, N. Shavrov wrote about this development, stating, "Currently, more than one million of the 1.3 million Armenians living in the South Caucasus are not native to this region. We [meaning the Russians] have resettled them here."<sup>30</sup>

Until 1918, there was no Armenian state in the South Caucasus. The Armenian Democratic Republic was formed by leaders of the Dashnaktsutyun organization after the dissolution of the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic. Under pressure from major powers and certain political circles, the government of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, on May 29, 1918, ceded the ancient Azerbaijani city of Yerevan and the surrounding 9,000 square kilometers to the Armenians. Based on the Batumi negotiations and agreements, the Armenian side sought the transfer of Yerevan and the surrounding Azerbaijani territories to them. In return, the Armenians undertook several obligations. According to the agreement reached during the Batumi negotiations, the Armenians had to refrain from territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Additionally, the Armenian government was obliged to withdraw Armenian armed forces from Baku and put an end to the mass atrocities committed against Muslims by Armenian armed formations in Azerbaijani regions.

28 Rusiya işğalı dövrü. [https://iravan.preslib.az/rusiya\\_isgal\\_dovru.html](https://iravan.preslib.az/rusiya_isgal_dovru.html)

29 Qərbi Azərbaycan ermənilərin köçürülməsi: tarixi torpaqlarımızda erməni dövlətinin yaradılması. 09.09.2023, [https://azertag.az/xeber/qerbi\\_azerbaycana\\_ermenilerin\\_kochurulmesi\\_tarixi\\_torpaqlarimizda\\_ermen\\_i\\_dovletinin\\_yaradilmasi\\_arasdirma-2747575](https://azertag.az/xeber/qerbi_azerbaycana_ermenilerin_kochurulmesi_tarixi_torpaqlarimizda_ermen_i_dovletinin_yaradilmasi_arasdirma-2747575)

30 Mahmudov Y., "İrəvan xanlığı", <https://mod.gov.az/az/irevan-tarixi-410/>

During the existence of the Armenian Democratic Republic for two years, it pursued a policy of territorial expansion by constantly occupying neighboring states' territories and making territorial claims against them. Armenia engaged in military conflicts with neighboring states, including Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Georgia.

In 1920, Armenia was invaded and Sovietized by the USSR on November 29th. This state, which was an independent socialist republic until 1922, was then transformed into a federative entity named the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic on December 13, 1922. In 1924, following the formation of the Soviet Union, the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic joined the Union. In 1936, the Transcaucasian state was abolished, and the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) emerged as one of the republics of the Soviet Union. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia became an independent state.

On February 22, 1946, the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party approved the draft prepared by the People's Commissariat of the USSR on the "Practical Measures for the Transfer of Armenians from Abroad to Soviet Armenia." This marked the beginning of the influx of Armenians from abroad to Soviet Armenia. In general, from 1946 to 1949, 96 thousand Armenians were resettled from foreign countries to Armenia, with a significant portion of them being settled in Yerevan and its surrounding regions.

In 1946, 50,900 Armenians immigrated to Armenia from Syria, Greece, Lebanon, Iraq, Bulgaria, and Romania. The following year, 1947, saw the resettlement of 35,400 Armenians from Palestine, Syria, France, the United States, Greece, Egypt, Iraq, and Lebanon to Armenia. Armenian leadership explained the decrease in the number of immigrants from 1946 to 1947 by stating that those coming from abroad were primarily urban residents, and it was not feasible to settle them in mountainous regions. On the other hand, those who were resettled were mainly interested in settling in and around Yerevan.

Concurrently, a policy was initiated to settle arriving Armenians and purposefully relocate Azerbaijani inhabitants from historical territories in order to alter the country's national-ethnic composition. In Armenia, based on the decisions of the Soviet Ministers' Council on December 23, 1947 (No. 4083) and March 10, 1948 (No. 754), more than 100,000 Azerbaijanis were mass deported from their ancestral homes in the territory of the Armenian SSR from 1948 to 1953.<sup>31</sup>

---

31 Mustafa N, Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı böyük ədalətsizlik – 1948-1953-cü illər deportasiyası, Xalq qəzeti, 23.12.2022, [https://www.elibrary.az/docs/qazet/qzt2022\\_5867.pdf](https://www.elibrary.az/docs/qazet/qzt2022_5867.pdf) - No 281. - s. 10



The Azerbaijani population faced mass killings and atrocities, with thousands of historical and cultural monuments and residential areas destroyed. After Soviet leader Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, the pace of Azerbaijani deportations from Armenia decreased, and a process of return for the population began.

On February 20, 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian SSR, with the participation of only Armenian deputies, adopted a decision on the removal of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast from the composition of the Azerbaijan SSR and its inclusion in the administrative-territorial region of Armenia. After the Azerbaijan SSR Supreme Soviet rejected the unconstitutional decision of the Armenian SSR Supreme Soviet, the nationalist leaders of Armenia began implementing the "Turkless Armenia" program of the Dashnaksutyun party. This policy, carried out from 1988 to 1991, resulted in the ethnic cleansing of all Azerbaijanis living in the territory of present-day Armenia. As a protest against the forced measures against Azerbaijanis in Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia, a rally was held on February 27-28, 1988.

As a result of the most recent ethnic cleansing, approximately 250,000 Azerbaijanis were expelled from 22 villages and 6 cities in Armenia. Over the past 200 years, more than two hundred Azerbaijani settlements on the current territory of Armenia have been erased from the map through various means, creating a mono-ethnic Armenian state on historical Azerbaijani lands.<sup>32</sup>

As of January 1, 2023, Armenia has a population of 2,976,800 Armenians, according to the available information.<sup>33</sup>

## 2.2. Armenians in the Republic of Georgia

The Republic of Georgia, one of the three states located in the South Caucasus, is situated at the intersection of Eastern Europe and Western Asia. It shares borders with Russia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Armenia and Turkey to the south. The Black Sea lies to the west of the country. The capital and largest city is Tbilisi, and the total area of the country is 69,700 square kilometers. Georgia gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

In the 80s and 90s of the 19th century, the process of Armenians migrating to Georgia began. Ivan Stepanovich Khatisov was the one who proposed the migration of Armenians to Georgia. In the years 1865-1875, he served as a special advisor to the Russian Czar for the Caucasus region.

32 Arzumalı V, Mustafa N. Tarixin qara səhifələri. Bakı, 1998, səh. 130-151

33 Демография - Правительство Республики Армения - Gov.am

In the years 1887-1893, he worked as the head of state property administration. With his participation, thousands of Armenians were resettled in Borcali, Javakheti, and along the Black Sea coast.

Between 1897 and 1902, 55,000 Armenians migrated to Georgia, settling mainly in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Tbilisi, Batumi, Gori, and other regions. In Tbilisi alone, the Armenian population increased from 46,700 to 124,900 between 1897 and 1910, with 68,000 being newcomers. In the 19th century, the largest Armenian community was located in Akhalkalaki, numbering 52,500 people. Apart from Akhalkalaki, significant Armenian populations lived in Akhaltsikhe, Sukhumi, Batumi, Tbilisi, and Borcali.

According to statistical documents from 1897, the population of the Georgian territories under the rule of the Russian Empire was 2,109,273 people. In Kutaisi Governorate, the Georgian population was 1.8 times higher than in Tiflis Governorate. Georgians constituted 44.3% of the total population in Tbilisi and 82.1% in Kutaisi Governorate. In Georgia, there were 197,000 Armenians. Armenians and Russians had a greater influx into Georgia during the second half of the 19th century. In the 19th century, Georgia's population increased by 2.7 times, while the Georgian population increased by 2.1 times. In comparison to 1895, the incoming Armenians increased by 4 times, Russians by 4 times, and Ossetians by 8 times.<sup>34</sup>

It is true that in the 19th century, determining the national composition of the Georgian population was surrounded by difficulties. In 1897, it was decided to use the mother tongue to clarify the national composition. Although initially recorded on the basis of designations based on ethnic and religious characteristics, later this data was compiled in a form that would help determine the proportion of Russian speakers and develop a policy of Russification. As a result of the migration process, major changes in the national composition took place, it is known that tsarism tried to apply the policy of russification, to destroy the unified national form in the area and to dissolve the union.<sup>35</sup>

After the dissolution of the Russian Empire in 1917, the Transcaucasian Democratic Federative Republic was established but only lasted for a month. On May 26, 1918, the Democratic Republic of Georgia was formed and existed until 1921. The republic was bordered by the Kuban People's Republic and the North Caucasus Mountain Republic to the north, the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian Republic to the south, and the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic to the southeast. During the era of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the

---

34 Антадзе К. Население Грузии в XIX веке (Историко-демографическое исследование). Тбилиси: Образование, 1973, с. 114

35 Джаошвили В. Население Грузии в XVIII-XX вв. Тбилиси: Наука, 1984, с. 110-111.

country's territory was approximately 107,600 km<sup>2</sup>, and the population was around 2.5 million.

Following the declaration of independence in Georgia, the socio-political situation in the region became complex. In major administrative cities like Tbilisi and Kutaisi, local Armenians played a significant role in movements such as “Virk” and “Javakhk.”

The “Javakhk” movement was first established in 1988, when the separatist movement began in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. The first committee established by this movement was established in Akhalkalek and later expanded its activities under the name of “Javakhk” National Movement. At the same time, one of the other important institutions operating in the region is the political party called “Virk” and the Union of Public Organizations “Samtsxhe-Javakhk”. This union unites more than 10 public organizations and tries to represent the interests of the Armenian community living in Georgia. The activity of such organizations in Georgia has led to the increase of ethnic tensions and the complication of the socio-political situation in the region.

Like Armenians in other parts of the Caucasus, their migration to Abkhazia began in the 19th century. Initially arriving as guests, Armenians started claiming the land as their own after residing in the region for some time, following the pattern observed in other areas.

During the Abkhazian conflict in the 1990s, Armenians sided with Abkhazians against the central Georgian government. Subsequently, the Armenian population in the region increased rapidly. Today, Armenians in Abkhazia refer to the area as the “Black Sea coast of Armenia” and consider themselves indigenous inhabitants. During the war when Armenia was involved in military operations to seize Azerbaijani territories, Armenian residents of Abkhazia collected funds to support the invading forces. Some Armenians from Abkhazia formed terrorist groups and traveled to Nagorno-Karabakh to participate in the conflict.

The Armenians in Georgia constitute the portion of the Armenian diaspora living outside the Republic of Armenia within Georgia.

As of January 2002, according to the general population census of Georgia, the number of Armenians living in the country was 248,929.<sup>36</sup>

---

36 Федеральная служба государственной статистики Российской Федерации: Предварительная оценка численности постоянного населения на 1 января 2013 года и в среднем за 2012 год (человек).

In the article published in the “Noev Kovcheg” newspaper in 2014, Armenians were portrayed as part of Abkhazia’s elite.<sup>37</sup>

In 2016, according to the findings of the population census conducted by the National Statistics Committee of Georgia, Armenians comprised 4.5% (168,100 individuals) of the Georgian population. Armenians held the second position in terms of numerical representation among ethnic minorities residing in Georgia. Nevertheless, if we take into account Armenians with Georgian surnames, the percentage would likely be higher. During the early post-Soviet era, particularly in Samtskhe-Javakheti, Armenians articulated radical perspectives and advocated for reunification with Armenia. Presently, it is acknowledged that there are 20 Armenian public organizations (possibly 40, as per some sources) actively functioning in Georgia.

### **2.3. Armenians in the Republic of Azerbaijan**

One of the most challenging periods in the history of Azerbaijan encompasses the years 1801-1813. The fragmentation of Azerbaijan into more than 20 smaller states, the absence of a strong unified state, and Russia’s expansionist policies exacerbated the situation. Russia, persisting in its incursions, crossed the Araz River and advanced southward, culminating in the signing of the Treaty of Gulistan. With the exception of the Khanates of Iravan and Nakhchivan, all Azerbaijani territories north of the Araz River, including the Khanate of Lenkaran, were annexed by Russia.

As part of their strategy, the Russian military aimed to relocate all Armenians from the occupied territories of Tabriz, Khoy, Salmas, and Maragha to the provinces of Nakhchivan, Iravan, and Karabakh. To justify this policy, Russia asserted that historical Azerbaijani territories like Iravan and Nakhchivan were Armenian lands.<sup>38</sup>

In the 19th century, the migration of Armenians to South Caucasus marked the beginning of numerous events. During that period, Armenians enjoyed increased privileges in the region. In 1823, of the approximately 20,000 families in the Karabakh province (the territory of the former Karabakh Khanate), Armenian families constituted around 15,000. Following this migration, the ethnic composition of the population underwent a significant transformation. In 1832, Azerbaijanis made up 64.8% of the population in

---

37 Скаков А. Армянское лицо Абхазии // Газета «Ноев Ковчег» No 2 (232) февраль (1-15) 2014 г. <https://noev-kovcheg.ru/mag/2014-02/4312.html>

38 О именовании присоединенных к России ханств Эриванского и Нахичеванского Областия Армянского // Полное собрание законов Российской империи. Собр. вт. т. III. СПб., 1830, ст. 1888

Karabakh, while Armenians accounted for 34.8%. By the 1880s in the Shusha district, Azerbaijanis constituted 41.5% of the population, while Armenians made up 58.2%.

According to the population census conducted in Russia in 1897, these figures changed to 53%, and by 1917, it was 52.3%. Subsequent censuses in 1926, 1959, 1970, and 1979 revealed that the ethnic composition of the population in the Azerbaijan SSR, in terms of Azerbaijanis and Armenians, was 89.1%, 84.4%, 80.5%, and 75.9%, respectively.<sup>39</sup>

The establishment of an Armenian state under Russian protection and the relocation of Armenians to the territories occupied by Russia from Iran and Turkey was not a random occurrence. The fifteenth article of the Treaty of Turkmenchay, signed on February 10, 1828, specifically addressed the relocation of Armenians. As a result of the Treaty of Turkmenchay, 40,000 Armenians were resettled in various areas of Azerbaijan.

As a result of the Treaty of Adrianople in 1829, 90,000 Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire were resettled in Azerbaijan. They primarily settled in the Khanates of Nakhchivan, Iravan, and Karabakh. Committees for resettlement were established in Iravan and Nakhchivan to facilitate the relocation of Armenians, and significant privileges were granted to the migrants. They were exempted from taxes and obligations for a period of six years, and funds were provided to them from the compensation received from Iran.

The migration of Armenians from Iran, Turkey, and other Eastern countries to Russia continued throughout subsequent periods. In 1827, Russia had occupied the Khanates of Nakhchivan and Iravan, dividing Azerbaijan into two territories controlled by the Russian Empire and the Qajar state.

From 1828 to 1831, a considerable number of Armenians were relocated to the Nakhchivan region. In Nakhchivan province and the Ordubad district, 2,387 families or 11,992 individuals (6,339 men, 5,653 women) were resettled from Iran, and 8 families or 27 individuals (17 men, 10 women) were relocated from Turkey.<sup>40</sup>

As a result of this policy, approximately 130,000 Armenian migrants (of which 50,000 settled in the territory of the Karabakh Khanate) were relocated to the territories of Azerbaijan Khanates, spanning from 1828 to 1830.

In connection with the Armenian migration to Karabakh in the 19th century, a monument called “Maraga-150” was erected in the town of Shikarx in the

39 Ermənilərin Qarabağa köçürülməsi, <https://azerbaijan.az/related-information/105>

40 Şahverdiyev Z. Naxçıvan bölgəsi XIX-XX əsrin əvvəllərində. Bakı:2008, 133 s.

Tertar district. The monument commemorates the 150th anniversary of the Armenians' relocation from Maraga in Iran to the present-day Tertar district. The monument features intricately crafted mosaic work and has dimensions of 1.5 meters in width and 3 meters in height. It is based on the composition "Girls at the Spring." Marble columns from springs were used on the left and right sides of the monument. On top of one marble column, the year 1828 is inscribed, and on the other, the year 1978. It is said that Armenians visited this site on significant occasions. In addition to "Maraga-150," other monuments related to the relocation of Armenians in the territory of Mountainous Karabakh include "Chayli-150," "Tsghabert-150," and "Mets Shen-150." Armenians have changed the names of these settlements to reflect their own names over time.

As a result of the national struggle for independence against Tsarist Russia, Azerbaijan emerged as an independent state after the First World War. It stands as the first secular democratic republic and parliamentary republic in the Turkish and Muslim world. Initially, Ganja served as the capital, later replaced by Baku. In 1918, independent states were formed in the South Caucasus. During this time, the Armenian Democratic Republic was established on a portion of Azerbaijan's territories.

The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR) covered an area of 113,900 square kilometers in South Caucasus, with a population exceeding 2.8 million. The Azerbaijan Democratic Republic succumbed to the aggressive intervention of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) on April 28, 1920, violating international legal norms. The Soviet Socialist Republic was established in Northern Azerbaijan, and in 1922, it participated in the formation of the Soviet Union within the framework of the RSFSR. In 1936, it adopted the title of an independent allied republic.

Within the structure of the Soviet Union, the Mountainous Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (MKAO) was established on July 7, 1923. At its inception, its territory covered 4,161 square kilometers, later expanding to 4,400 square kilometers.

In a letter to Stalin, the first secretary of the Armenian Communist Party Central Committee, Q. Arutunov, requested the unification of the Mountainous Karabakh Autonomous Oblast with Armenia. According to archival documents, after Q. Arutunov's appeal to Moscow, on November 28, 1945, Georgy Malenkov forwarded the demand for the unification of Mountainous Karabakh with Armenia to Mir Jafar Bagirov.

On December 10, 1945, Mir Jafar Bagirov responded that he agreed to Arutunov's request with the condition that Shusha be excluded. Additionally,



he proposed that the territories of Azizbeyov, Vedi, and Qarabaglar, where Azerbaijanis lived, be annexed to Azerbaijan. Moreover, he suggested the return of the Azerbaijani-populated districts of Georgia's Borcali region and the Derbent and Qasimkend districts of the Dagestan Autonomous Republic to Azerbaijan. After this proposal, the issue was seemingly closed, but it was replaced by the deportation of Azerbaijanis from Armenia.

The Mountainous Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (MKAO), possessing all essential elements of self-governance, had the status of an autonomous region within the Azerbaijan SSR according to the constitutions of the USSR in 1936 and 1977. As per the constitutions of the USSR and Azerbaijan SSR, the legal status of MKAO was presented to the Azerbaijani SSR Supreme Soviet by the People's Deputies Soviet of MKAO. This was regulated by a law adopted on June 16, 1981, concerning MKAO. The region had an established education system, with schools and institutions ranking relatively high among the republic's districts based on the number of places. The Armenian language was used in many areas, and it was employed in the government, administrative and judicial bodies, as well as in education reflecting language requirements. Local TV and radio broadcasts, as well as newspapers and journals, were also published in Armenian.<sup>41</sup>

Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict has become one of the most tragic conflicts in the history of the 20th century. In the late 1980s, Armenia began making territorial claims on Azerbaijan's historical lands, leading to acts of terrorism. Exploiting the weakening of the central Soviet government in the late 1980s, the leadership of the Armenian SSR and the Armenian diaspora initiated movements to separate MKAO, established within the Azerbaijan SSR in 1923, and annex it to the Armenian SSR. Subsequently, conflicts arose in Karabakh.

After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Armenia launched open military aggression. The territories of Nagorno-Karabakh and seven surrounding districts were occupied by Armenia, leading to ethnic cleansing of the population. Over a million Azerbaijanis were turned into refugees and internally displaced persons. Armenian settlers were brought illegally from abroad to the occupied territories, artificially increasing the Armenian population. Numerous other illegal actions were taken by Armenia during the occupation.

During the First Nagorno-Karabakh War, many Armenian militants, particularly those from the ASALA organization, were trained at the military training camp in Lebanon and later sent to Armenia. These terrorists played a

---

41 Qasımlı M.C. Azərbaycan Respublikasının tarixi (1991-2021): 2 cildə. I cild (1991-2003). Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, 2021. – 384 s.



significant role in the occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh and surrounding regions. During the occupation years, Armenian mercenaries, especially from Lebanon and Syria, were sent to these territories.<sup>42</sup> After over 30 years of occupation, Azerbaijan reclaimed its historical territories as a result of the Patriotic War that commenced on September 27, 2020, and lasted for 44 days. In this war, Azerbaijan restored its sovereignty. The Republic of Azerbaijan, having freed its territories and restored its sovereignty, has also strengthened its position on the international stage. Today, in the liberated territories, efforts are underway to rebuild infrastructure and undertake foundational projects.

## **Conclusion**

The research delves into information regarding the Caucasus region and the presence of Armenians in the area. Armenians are active in the North Caucasus, specifically in the Republics of Adygea, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachay-Cherkessia, Chechnya, Dagestan, North Ossetia-Alania, as well as in the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories. The Armenians residing in these regions benefit from the socio-economic opportunities and engage in various fields of activity. In general, the number of Armenians in the Russian Federation is 1,182,388.

Armenians can be found on all sides of the North Caucasus. In the 19th and 20th centuries, particularly between 1890 and 1920, the number of Armenians in the North Caucasus increased 2.3 times. The presence of Armenians in the region continues to contribute to tensions. This is naturally influenced by the problems they face in the areas they inhabit, as well as historical narratives and territorial claims.

It is known that Armenians are actively involved in the socio-economic sphere in the Krasnodar and Stavropol territories. In these regions, they are observed to gather in many resort cities. Many industrial sectors in these areas are managed by Armenian entrepreneurs who strive to promote the products and services of small and medium-sized businesses to the international market.

Research has revealed that the intentional resettlement of Armenians in the South Caucasus has shaped the ethnic-political map of this region with an “Armenian factor.” Despite the absence of an Armenian state in the South Caucasus until 1918, the decision of the government of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on May 29, 1918, to concede the ancient Azerbaijani city of Iravan, along with its surrounding 9,000 square kilometers of territory, to

---

42 İşğal olunmuş ərazilərdə qanunsuz məskunlaşdırma, <https://mfa.gov.az/az/category/ermenistanin-azerbaycana-qarsi-tecavuzunun-fesadlari/isgal-olunmus-erazilerde-qanunsuz-meskunlasdirma>

the Armenians under the pressure of major powers and certain political circles laid the groundwork for Armenians to make territorial claims today and pursue a policy of expanding their territories by occupying the territories of neighboring states.

The intensive resettlement of Armenians to the South Caucasus in the mid-19th century to the early 20th century created favorable conditions for the emergence of Armenian separatism in Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict has been one of the conflicts in the Caucasus region that has caused a significant loss of life. Armenians advocating for territorial claims pursued a cunning policy in this regard.

In present times, Armenian claims to the territories of Georgia are indirectly related to their mass resettlement into present-day Georgia. Armenians, who occasionally express cultural autonomy demands in Georgia and support separatists, primarily aim to acquire new territories. The basis for their claims lies in the massive resettlement of Armenians into Georgia.

During the Abkhazia conflict in the 1990s, Armenians sided with the Abkhaz against the central Georgian government. Subsequently, their numbers in the region rapidly increased, and they began to consolidate within separatist structures in various state institutions.

As a result, the resettlement of Armenians to the South Caucasus has contributed to the realization of their desires for a “Greater Armenia” or an “Armenia from sea to sea.” The presence and claims of Armenians have become a source of concern for neighboring states seeking stability in the region. This process continues into the modern era.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Армяне хотели заселить Чечню: российский историк опубликовал рассекреченные документы. 03.04.2019, <https://minval.az>

Açma B., Yenişen K. Kafkasya'nın ekonomik potansiyeli ve dönüşümü için politika ve stratejiler // yönetim ve ekonomi. Cild 20. Türkiye, Celal Bayar ün-si, 2013, s.132-149.

Армянский бизнес готов инвестировать в сферу технологий в Ставрополье. 28.04.2017, [ru/armeniasputnik.am](http://ru/armeniasputnik.am)

Arzumanlı V, Mustafa N. Tarixin qara səhifələri. Bakı, 1998, səh. 130-151

Balancar F. 1864'ten günümüze Çerkesler ve Ermeniler, 26.02.2018, <https://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/20266/1864ten-gunumuze-cerkesler-ve-ermeniler>

Численность населения по полу по субъектам Российской Федерации на 1 января 2022 года (с учётом итогов Всероссийской переписи населения 2020 г.). Федеральная служба государственной статистики (30 декабря 2022).

Численность постоянного населения Российской Федерации по муниципальным образованиям на 1 января 2023 года (с учётом итогов Всероссийской переписи населения 2020 г.). Федеральная служба государственной статистики (18 августа 2023).

Цифры предоставлены А.Е. Тер-Саркисянцем, Российская академия наук. Интервью Хьюман Райтс Вотч, Москва, 1996 г., <http://www.omri.cz/Elections/Russia/Regions/About/Stavropol.html>.

Джаошвили В. Население Грузии в XVIII-XX вв. Тбилиси: Наука, 1984, с. 110-111.

Демография - Правительство Республики Армения - Gov.am

Erməni terrorizmi, <https://azerbaijan.az/related-information/120>

Ermənistan-Azərbaycan münaqişəsi. İstifadə tarixi: 09.03.2024, <https://president.az/az/pages/view/azerbaijan/karabakh>

Ermənilərin Qarabağa köçürülməsi, <https://azerbaijan.az/related-information/105>

Федеральная служба государственной статистики Российской Федерации:  
Предварительная оценка численности постоянного населения на 1  
января 2013 года и в среднем за 2012 год (человек).

İşğal olunmuş ərazilərdə qanunsuz məskunlaşdırma.  
<https://mfa.gov.az/az/category/ermenistanin-azerbaycana-qarsi-tecavuzunun-fesadlari/isgal-olunmus-erazilerde-qanunsuz-meskunlasdirma>

Кабардино-Балкарское региональное отделение общероссийской  
организации Союза армян России «Ахбюр» Accessed: 10.03.2024,  
<https://nalchik.bezformata.com/listnews/kabardino-balkarskoe-regionalnoe/70795926/>

Кочеткова С., Армяне Адыгеи народными гуляньями отмечают древний  
праздник Терендез. 13.02.2012,  
<https://www.yuga.ru/news/253542/>

Канадеев И.Н. Указ.раб., с. 5- 33.

Qasımlı M.C., Azərbaycan Respublikasının tarixi (1991- 2021): 2 cildə. I cild  
(1991-2003). Bakı: Bakı Dövlət Universiteti, 2021. - 384 s.

Qasımlı M., Ömərov.V., Məmmədova N., Həbibbəyli S., Salayev K.  
Gürcüstanda erməni təşkilatlarının fəaliyyəti (XIX əsr – XXI əsrin  
əvvəlləri), Bakı: 2020, 606 s.

Qərbi Azərbaycana ermənilərin köçürülməsi: tarixi torpaqlarımızda erməni  
dövlətinin yaradılması. 09.09.2023,  
[https://azertag.az/xeber/qerbi\\_azerbaycana\\_ermenilerin\\_kochurulmesi\\_tarixi\\_torpaqlarimizda\\_ermeni\\_dovletinin\\_yaradilmasi\\_arasdirma-2747575](https://azertag.az/xeber/qerbi_azerbaycana_ermenilerin_kochurulmesi_tarixi_torpaqlarimizda_ermeni_dovletinin_yaradilmasi_arasdirma-2747575)

Лица России. Проект ИА Росбалт. [http:// www. rusnations.ru /etnos/ armayn](http://www.rusnations.ru/etnos/armayn)

Mahmudov Y., "İrəvan xanlığı", <https://mod.gov.az/az/irevan-tarixi-410/>

Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации. 20.02.2017, О  
сотрудничестве субъектов Северо[15]-Кавказского федерального  
округа с республикой Армения,  
[https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/economic\\_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/economic_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690/)

Многоголосая культура народов Кабардино-Балкарии,  
<https://гнбкбр.пф/wp-content/uploads/proects/culture/ethnos/armenians/overview.html>

- Министерство иностранных дел Российской Федерации. 20.02.2017, О сотрудничестве субъектов Северо-Кавказского федерального округа с республикой Армения,  
[https://mid.ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/economic\\_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690/](https://mid.ru/ru/foreign_policy/economic_diplomacy/vnesneekonomiceskie-svazi-sub-ektov-rossijskoj-federacii/1542690/)
- Mustafa N, Azərbaycan xalqına qarşı böyük ədalətsizlik – 1948-1953-cü illər deportasiyası, Xalq qezeti, 23.12.2022,  
[https://www.elibrary.az/docs/qazet/qzt2022\\_5867.pdf](https://www.elibrary.az/docs/qazet/qzt2022_5867.pdf) - No 281. - s. 10
- Национальный состав Российской Федерации. Информационные материалы об окончательных итогах Всероссийской переписи населения 2010 года/  
[http://www.gks.ru/free\\_doc/new\\_site/perepis2010/perepis\\_itogi1612.htm](http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/perepis_itogi1612.htm)
- Официальный сайт Главы и Правительства Карачаево-Черкесской Республики: Общие данные о Карачаево-Черкесии.
- О именовании присоединенных к России ханств Эриванского и Нахичеванского Областью Армянского // Полное собрание законов Российской империи. Собр. вт. т. III. СПб., 1830, ст. 1888.
- Rusiya işğalı dövrü. [https://iravan.preslib.az/rusiya\\_igal\\_dovru.html](https://iravan.preslib.az/rusiya_igal_dovru.html)
- Северная Осетия, 30.11.2017,  
<https://moyaokruga.ru/sevosetia/Articles.aspx?articleId=133629>
- Северная Осетия. 29.12.202,  
<https://moyaokruga.ru/sevosetia/Articles.aspx?articleId=422324>  
29.12.202
- Султанов К. Краснодарская Армянская Республика: армяне нацелились оттяпать Юг России. /<https://vzglyad.az/news/>
- Стратегия социально-экономического развития Ставропольского края до /2035 года/  
<https://economy.gov.ru/material/file/2be4c8d2cabdb0ce884b047834a7540f/210119sk>.
- Скаков А. Армянское лицо Абхазии // Газета «Ноев Ковчег» № 2 (232) февраль (1-15) 2014 г. <https://noev-kovcheg.ru/mag/2014-02/4312.html>
- Şahverdiyev Z. Naxçıvan bölgəsi XIX-XX əsrin əvvəllərində. Bakı: 2008, 133 s.

Toksoy.A. XIX. Yüzyılda Rusya'nın Kafkas Politikası ve Ermeniler.  
04.04.2014, <http://ekoavrasya.net/duyuru.aspx?did=136&Lang=TR>

Tasam, Kafkasya'da Bir Ülke: Çeçenistan. 21.06.2011,  
[https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/2213/kafkasyada\\_bir\\_ulke\\_cecenistan/](https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/2213/kafkasyada_bir_ulke_cecenistan/)

Toksoy.A. XIX. Yüzyılda Rusya'nın Kafkas Politikası ve Ermeniler.  
04.04.2014,  
<http://ekoavrasya.net/duyuru.aspx?did=136&Lang=TR>

## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

To cite this article: Çelik, Adil. "Armenian Image in Turkish Folk Narratives", *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 50 (2024): 123-140.

Received: 13.10.2024

Accepted: 10.11.2024

# ARMENIAN IMAGE IN TURKISH FOLK NARRATIVES\*

(TÜRK HALK ANLATILARINDA ERMENİ İMAJI)

Adil ÇELİK\*\*

**Abstract:** *This study examines how the Armenian image is reflected in legends, epics, folk tales and jokes in the Turkish oral narrative tradition. Images are fed by stereotypes. In this respect, this study, which aims to search for images in folklore, primarily clarifies the relationship between stereotypes and folklore. By touching on the importance of the concept of "other" in the construction of social identities, it is aimed to reveal how the Armenian image is stereotyped in folklore and oral narratives. The research focused on the places with which the Armenian image is associated, the physical qualities and behavioral patterns of this image. The data obtained as a result of the scans were subjected to qualitative data analysis. The findings show that the Armenian image in oral memory has become clear both with a function that reminds the Turkish society of the behavioral patterns it should exhibit and with a meaning that resembles common shared values. It has also been revealed how the skills of Armenians in various professions found a place in social memory. In addition, it has been revealed that the image of Armenians as the other is constructed as an alternative of a cluster intertwined with religious and national identity, which has the potential for variability. As a result, it can*

\* This article is based on the author's doctoral thesis titled "Stereotypes in Turkish Narrative Tradition". See: Adil Çelik, *Türk Anlatı Geleneğinde Stereotipler* (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, 2019).

\*\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5347-3579>  
Assoc. Prof. Dr., Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Faculty of Letters, Department of Turkish Folklore, E-mail: [acelik@cumhuriyet.edu.tr](mailto:acelik@cumhuriyet.edu.tr)



*be said that the Armenian image, with its positive and negative qualities, holds an important place in Turkish social memory.*

**Keywords:** *Armenian image, oral narrative, folk literature, stereotype.*

**Öz:** *Bu çalışma, Türk sözlü anlatı geleneğindeki efsane, destan, halk hikâyesi ve fıkralara Ermeni imajının nasıl yansındığını incelemektedir. İmajlar stereotiplerden beslenmektedir. Bu açıdan folklorda imaj aramaya dönük bu çalışma, öncelikle stereotipler ve folklor arasındaki ilişkiyi açıklığa kavuşturmaktadır. Toplumsal kimliklerin inşasında “öteki” kavramının önemine değinerek Ermeni imajının folklor ve sözlü anlatılarda nasıl kalıplaştığının ortaya konulması hedeflenmektedir. Araştırmada, Ermeni imajının bağlantılı olduğu mekânlara, bu imajın bedensel niteliklerine ve davranış kalıplarına odaklanılmıştır. Taramalar sonucunda elde edilen veriler nitel veri analizine tabi tutulmuştur. Ulaşılan bulgular, sözel bellekteki Ermeni imajının, hem Türk toplumuna sergilemesi gereken davranış kalıplarını hatırlatan bir işlevle hem de ortak paylaşılmışlıkları andıran bir anlamla belirlendiğini göstermektedir. Ermenilerin çeşitli mesleklerdeki becerilerinin toplumsal bellek içinde nasıl yer bulduğu da ortaya konulmuştur. Ayrıca, bir öteki olarak Ermeni imajının din ve ulus kimliği ile iç içe geçmiş bir kümenin değişkenlik potansiyeli barındıran bir alternatifini olarak kurgulandığı ortaya konmuştur. Sonuç olarak, Ermeni imajının, olumlu ve olumsuz nitelikleriyle Türk toplumsal belleğinde önemli bir yer tuttuğu söylenebilir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Ermeni imajı, sözlü anlatı, halk edebiyatı, stereotip.*

## Introduction

This study focuses on the qualities of the Armenian image, specifically the types of legends, epics, folk tales and jokes that are part of the Turkish oral narrative tradition. Regardless of whether it is ethnic, national, class, religious or sectarian, the other has always been needed in the construction and continuity of social identities. The images designed about the other are preserved in social memory by being stereotyped. It is known that societies use productions made in different fields of art, especially media, while preserving the designs of the other in their memories and transferring them to future generations. However, there is a preservation tool that is older than the media, written literary works and many branches of art: folklore in general and oral narratives in particular. Formality, traditionality and anonymity of folklore<sup>1</sup>; it coincides with the nature of stereotypes. In other words, stereotypes, just like a fairy tale or a ritual, are a type of information whose first producer is uncertain and which is transmitted within tradition by becoming stereotypes. This information gives rise to images, and images contribute to the continuity in the identity and belonging consciousness of the society that produces it.

Based on these assumptions, in this study, the Armenian image reflected in Turkish folk narratives was discussed, and in addition to the spatial and physical elements that make up the image in question, the behavioral patterns presented as a part of the Armenian image were analyzed through qualitative data analysis and the function of the image in question was tried to be shown.

## Relationship Between Image and Folklore

The concept of “image”, which expresses the mental designs of external groups that are effective in the formation of identity, and the concepts of “stereotype”, which are stereotypes that make these images become clear in mind, are highly related to each other. In order to see this relationship, it is necessary to look at what meanings researchers attribute to the relevant concepts. The concept of image is the basis of the term *imagology*, which was first used by Oliver Brachfeld<sup>2</sup>; It is one of the concepts that has become popular in history, sociology and literature research in the last half century. Derived from the Latin concept of *imago*, which means a mask worn in funeral ceremonies and representing the spirits of ancestors<sup>3</sup>, the word image

1 Franciss Lee Utley, “Folk Literature: An Operational Definition”, *The Study of Folklore* (ed: Alan Dundes), (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 7-24.

2 Oliver Brachfeld, *Inferiority Feelings: In the Individual and the Group* (London: Routledge, 2014).

3 Halime Yücel, *İmgeden Yoruma* (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2013), 20.

in the sense of “dream” is defined as a voluntary or involuntary expression of the subconscious with certain associations<sup>4</sup>, and it seems self-explanatory.

Elements such as individual experiences, social perception and acculturation tools are decisive in the formation of the image, which is the dreams created in the mind by certain associations. According to Yücel, images are generally grouped into three categories: Some of these are dreams and mental images. Others are scenes that we look at in a certain way. The third one is the produced images in communication tools<sup>5</sup>. The images that appear in oral narratives and will be discussed on the axis of identity within the scope of this study are included in the first cluster in Yücel’s classification. One of the common acceptance of researchers who analyze images through literary texts is that the authors who produce these texts do not only reflect their own inner worlds, but also present the general acceptances of the society in which they grew up. From this perspective, although social acceptances are tried to be analyzed within the image bracket even in individual literary creations<sup>6</sup>, it is a deficiency that the same concept is not subjected to a comprehensive research in folkloric texts.

Perceiving the image, in a way, is reconstructing the image subjectively. Our culture, emotions, world view, and fears are effective in our perception of images<sup>7</sup>. Based on this judgment, it is possible to say that during the composition of an oral narrative, a social memory based on experiences and a subjectivity resulting from this are active when the listeners around the storyteller perceive the images. In this context, images, which are representations of foreignness in oral narratives, can be considered as elements that the consumer mass makes sense of and creates while consuming collectively. One of the common points pointed out by researchers who focus on the subject of identity is the concept of image. Serhat Ulağlı touches upon the history and method of image studies in his work titled “Imagology: Introduction to the Science of the Other” (en.). According to Ulağlı’s opinion, imageology is a discipline in itself. It is especially emphasized that this field, which was born in the 1960’s, has an interdisciplinary nature. It is stated that imagology studies, which are said to be related to sciences such as literature, history, philosophy, political science and psychology, have long examined the concepts of us and the other. In his work, Ulağlı states that stereotypes, beliefs,

4 Serhat Ulağlı, *İmgebilim: Ötekinin Bilimine Giriş* (Ankara: Sinemis, 2006).

5 Yücel, *İmgeden Yoruma*, 23.

6 For examples on this topic, see: Vernon K. Robbins, Walter S. Melion and Roy R. Jeal. *The Art of Visual Exegesis: Rhetoric, Texts, Images (Emory Studies in Early Christianity)* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017); John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London:

7 Yücel, *İmgeden Yoruma*, 26.

cultural codes, fears and hatreds are effective in the formation of the image of the other<sup>8</sup> and points to folklore - without actually being aware of it. In the section where image analysis methods are explained, the same researcher says that when conducting author-oriented image studies, choosing works that are especially popular with the public will produce healthier results<sup>9</sup>; it brings to mind that anonymous narratives are farther from individuality and closer to sociality in the context of production and consumption compared to written literature, and makes it important to investigate the images of foreignness in oral narratives.

The fact that the first creators of anonymous folk narratives have been forgotten shows that the ideas suggested in the content of the texts are taken for granted by the society. This result makes the texts produced within the oral narrative tradition more valuable than the examples produced within the written literary tradition, as they contain more social acceptance. H. Millas emphasizes that people's experiences, common perceptions of the society they are a member of, communication tools, education and literature are among the factors that are effective in the formation of the image<sup>10</sup>. Considering these views, the functionality and importance of focusing on folklore products of image studies in order to understand society is better understood.

We understand the existence of a semantic link between the concept of "image" and the concept of "other" from the following explanations: According to Daniel Henri Pagaeu, one of the pioneers of image research, every image contains an "I" or "here" and an "other" somewhere. It also arises from the "there" relationship. In this way, societies or groups of people share the culture, politics, ideologies etc. to which they are affiliated. They also detect the environment. The designed environment strongly exhibits a "duality": "Us" and "other". Societies determine and perceive themselves in this way. A "national" identity only exists according to the other side. This opposite side has a roughly "general" appearance<sup>11</sup>. The image is the packaged form of this general view, and folklore genres contain many reflections of the images in question.

## Analysis of Findings

An image is, first of all, a dream, and every dream is mostly shaped by visual elements. It is known that in today's Turkish social memory, Yeşilçam cinema

8 Serhat Ulağlı, *İmgebilim: Ötekinin Bilimine Giriş* (Ankara: Sinemis Yayınları, 2006), 19.

9 Ulağlı, *İmgebilim*, 60.

10 Herkül Millas, *Türk Romanı ve Öteki: Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı* (İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000), 4.

11 Millas, *Türk Romanı ve Öteki*, 5.

is often used as a reference to clarify Armenian, Jewish or Greek images in minds<sup>12</sup>. When we go back a little further, we see that this source is based on novels and theater plays. Almost all of them contain physical signs such as clothing and accessories that support these images. The other usually has a bodily design that evokes negative meanings and separations. In cases where Armenians are remembered with positive physical qualities, social memory places such situations on an epistemological basis. In the narrative called Koroğlu's Kidnapping of Ayvaz, which includes one of these situations, Koroğlu begins to search for Ayvaz, who is famous for her beauty. Ayvaz is the 14-year-old boy of an Armenian named Antik, whose father works as a butcher in Üsküdar. The fact that this boy is more beautiful than all the girls is the reason why Koroğlu is looking for him. In a section where Ayvaz's beauty is mentioned, it is stated that if he does not become a Muslim, his beauty will disappear at the age of forty and he will become ugly<sup>13</sup>. These expressions are seen as the epistemological basis in question, which shows that, although Koroğlu pursues it, the beauty of an Armenian does not mean anything if it is not complemented spiritually with the values that are precious in the memory of the Turks. Ayvaz, who is stated to be more beautiful than many of the girls mentioned in the narrative, is shown to accept Islam as a condition for him to maintain this impressiveness.

One of the qualities of the Armenian image is his skill in various professions. In the narrative of Koroğlu and Demircioğlu, Demircioğlu, who is the journeyman of the Armenian master named Armanik, becomes one of his mentors after meeting Koroğlu<sup>14</sup>. Ayvaz and Demircioğlu can be considered as reflections of positive stereotypes about Armenians in the verbal memory of Turkish society. Ayvaz, who was the closest figure to Koroğlu and to whom he entrusted everything, was Armenian, and a hero like Demircioğlu, who stood out with his bravery, was the journeyman of an Armenian master. Especially during the Ottoman period, the term "millet-i sadıka", means loyal nation, was formed in Turkish regarding the Armenian community. The statement points to the same point.

It is also possible to see the judgments of the two communities about each other in the narratives formed around joke types. It is very common to use stereotypes existing in folklore to create the conflict environment required for comedy to emerge. One of the images shaped by these stereotypes is the Armenian, and in this respect it is included in Nasreddin Hodja's jokes. In a section of Saltıknâme where Nasrettin Hodja is mentioned, it is stated that the

12 Dilara Balcı, *Yeşilçam'da Öteki Olmak: Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye Sinemasında Gayrimüslim Temsilleri* (İstanbul: Kolektif Kitap, 2013).

13 Mehmet Kaplan, Mehmet Akalın, Muhan Bali. *Koroğlu Destanı (Anlatan Behçet Mahir)*, Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1973), 52.

14 Kaplan at al., *Koroğlu Destanı*, 17.

Armenians living in Karahisar said that Nasrettin Hodja was a “stupid Turk” and that they said, “Let’s laugh at his beard if he comes here.”<sup>15</sup> Even though the text ends here, it can be said based on the general characteristics of the jokes around Nasreddin Hodja; it is clear that Hodja will go and defeat his enemies based on this provocative discourse.

The fact that minorities appear in the narratives as figures who mostly live in cities should be related to the fact that the possibility of encountering these groups takes place in cities, rather than showing that these groups live in cities in general. The blacksmith shop of the Armenian blacksmith Armanik in the story of Köroğlu and Demircioğlu is in the city of Erzurum<sup>16</sup>. Ayvaz’s father, Antik, lives in Üsküdar<sup>17</sup>. Aslı’s father lives in Ahlat in the story of “Kerem and Aslı”<sup>18</sup>.

It is worth noting that, unlike the Jews, Armenians were seen not only as an urban minority but also as a group living in villages. One of the spatial backdrops that complete the Armenian image is the Armenian church. In one joke, Bekri Mustafa gets drunk and wants to enter an Armenian church and visit it. Bekri entered the church in the middle of the night and examined the pictures on the walls under the guidance of the priest and the sexton; when he sees that there is a lamp in front of the pictures of Mary, Jesus and Many Saints, but there is no oil lamp in front of only one picture, he asks why. When the officers say that the person in the picture is Satan, Bekri tells them to put a lamp in front of this picture. The priest and the sexton agree to avoid any trouble and light a lamp in front of the picture of Satan, and Bekri leaves the church. Bekri, who had all kinds of nightmares while sleeping at night, immediately went to the church in the morning and said, “Quickly, extinguish the lamp in front of this monster!”. He realizes his mistake by saying “It is better for such a sinful thing to remain in the dark.”<sup>19</sup>. It can be said that in this text, the Armenian church is included as a place that is not in conflict with Islamic teaching and even overlaps with it.

Compared to the Jew, an other minority who appears only in cities in the Turkish narrative tradition, the number of examples in which the Armenian image is presented in the village is higher. It is known that Armenians, one of Turkey’s autochthonous ethnicities, have villages in Anatolia. On the other hand, the underlying reason why Armenians appear in cities in Turkish folk

15 Pertev Naili Boratav, *Nasreddin Hoca* (İstanbul: Kırmızı Yayınları, 2006), 109.

16 Kaplan at al., *Köroğlu Destanı*, 15.

17 Kaplan at al., *Köroğlu Destanı*, 48.

18 Ali Duyamaz, *Kerem ile Aslı Hikâyesi Üzerinde Mukayeseli Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: KB Yayınları, 2001), 255.

19 Abdülkadir Emeksiz, *Bir İstanbul Kahramanı Bekri Mustafa (İnceleme – Metin)*, İstanbul: Mühür Kitaplığı, 2010)

narratives is; this is due to the fact that the city has more chances of encountering the different than the village. Bekri Mustafa's type also has a consciousness that is incompatible with Islamic teachings. The same consciousness is also contrary to the teachings of the Armenian church. Bekri Mustafa's realization that what he did was wrong at the end of the narrative can be indirectly accepted as a reflection of the respect felt for the teachings of the Armenian church in the social memory that produced this anecdote.

In a legend compiled from Tokat, Keçeci Baba, a saint coming from Khorasan, goes to an Armenian village and knocks on the door of a house, saying that he is looking for water to perform ablution. Thereupon, the Armenian woman points to the river in a scolding manner. Upon this situation, Keçeci Baba first sticks the staff in his hand into the ground and performs ablution from the resulting water, then stands on a high stone and recites the adhan, cursing that Armenian village to be destroyed. In the continuation of the narrative, the village disappears and that area becomes a complete cemetery. According to the source, the stone on which the adhan was recited is still standing. This stone is called the "Footstep Stone" and it is believed that children who have not yet started walking are taken to that stone to help them walk quickly<sup>20</sup>. In this narrative, although respect and help are expected from the opposing group, there is a response to the disrespect shown. With saints prayer, not only the person who shows disrespect but also the entire community that that person belongs to disappears. Punishing the society instead of the individual is the product of mythological thought in which sociality comes to the fore instead of individuality. The stories of Admetos in Greek mythology and Deli Dumrul in Turkish mythology were also shaped by the same mythological thought in which socialism predominates. According to this primitive idea, it is possible for an individual to pay the penalty for the damage caused by not complying with social norms by sacrificing other individuals from the society in which that individual belongs. The transformation of the Armenian village in the narrative into a cemetery is an emphasis made to strengthen the organization of the community that produced the text. Accordingly, people who perform acts that the culture does not approve of are victimized and society is purified with these sacrifices. Kearney explains that the price of creating a happy community is the exclusion of foreigners. Most cultures produce sacrifice myths to turn foreigners into scapegoats. Scapegoating enthusiasts isolate or eliminate these strangers whom they hold responsible for social ills. Such a sacrificial strategy endows communities with a binding identity; that is, it provides basic awareness of who is included in the community (we) and who is excluded from the community (them)<sup>21</sup>.

20 Saim Sakaoğlu. *101 Anadolu Efsanesi*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1989), 41.

21 Richard Kearney, *Strangers, Gods and Monsters Interpreting Otherness* (London: Routledge, 2002).



One of the ways the Armenians in the narratives protect the place they live in is to sanctify this place with a motivation that derives its origin from the ideas of Muslims. One of the examples that can be given to this appears in a legend compiled from Erzurum. In the legend in question, based on Turks' deep respect for tombs, Armenians portray the places where they keep their valuable goods as tombs<sup>22</sup>. In this text, Armenians' practices regarding space are actually shaped by the sacredness of Muslims. Therefore, although the indicator (mausoleum) at the top indicates that the place belongs to the Turks and its sanctity, the treasure found deep inside lives on as a remnant of the existing conflict.

Another spatial element associated with non-Muslims in general, and Greeks and Armenians in particular, is the tavern. Stereotypes about associating tavern management with Armenians are found in folklore, especially in Bekri Mustafa anecdotes. The image of the Armenian tavern owner named Agop is found in eleven jokes<sup>23</sup>. Apart from these examples, another anecdote mentions another Armenian tavern owner named Onnik, apart from Agop<sup>24</sup>. It should not be forgotten that the stereotypical thought dynamic that associates tavern keepers with Armenians or Greeks also has a relationship with social reality. In these anecdotes, Agop's tavern is a place where people looking for Bekri Mustafa can definitely find him<sup>25</sup>. The friendship between Bekri and Agop is so strong that Bekri Mustafa, whose wife is about to give birth, first rushes to ask Agop for help in finding a midwife<sup>26</sup>. Bekri Mustafa even shares his secrets with Agop, not his wife<sup>27</sup>. In another anecdote, tavern keepers who suffer from the alcohol ban imposed by the state gather and go to Bekri Mustafa, and Bekri starts looking for a solution together with Agop<sup>28</sup>. In short, Agop is Bekri's true friend. Reconciling the identity of Bekri Mustafa with the tavern run by Agop is actually a natural result of placing Bekri Mustafa and the Armenian image in the same place. On the other hand, in the anecdotes, Bekri Mustafa's ability to neutralize and outsmart the dynamics with which he came into conflict can be considered as an expression of the positive thoughts and tolerant approach of the Turkish society towards the Armenians. In other words, it can be said that the superiority Bekri gained directly is indirectly associated with the Armenian image. Such constructive thoughts can be read as evidence that the Turkish society, which has ruled empires throughout history, maintains tolerance within tradition.

22 Bilge Seyidoğlu, *Erzurum Efsaneleri* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2005), 55.

23 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 157, 165, 180, 184, 188, 212, 217, 242, 243, 264, 272.

24 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 211.

25 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 165.

26 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 184.

27 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 220.

28 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 188.

Stereotypes and narratives about Armenians being a craftsman society, just like the Jews, appear in the narratives. In the narrative of Koroğlu and Demircioğlu, Koroğlu, who disguises himself during the day and uses the name Ali, goes to a blacksmith from time to time to get Kırat a horseshoe. In this narrative, the person who practices the blacksmith profession is an Armenian named Armanik. It is emphasized in the narrative that he was a good iron master, and Demircioğlu, a hero like Koroğlu, is the journeyman of this Armenian master. In the narrative, Muslims' work alongside Armenian craftsmen is emphasized by the storyteller, appreciating the Armenians' skills in this regard<sup>29</sup>. This statement of the narrator is a contemporary parenthesis of tolerance that opens to the epic world.

Although they appear to be distinguished masters in the professions they practice, stereotypes about Armenians being deprived of some rights because they are not Muslims are evident in the narratives. In the narrative called Koroğlu - Niğdeli Geyik Ahmet, Koroğlu kidnaps Ayvaz, a fourteen-year-old boy, and the Sultan, who is aware of this situation, calls him to his side. When the Sultan asked why he kidnapped the child, Koroğlu stated that the child was Armenian and that he kidnapped this child in order to teach him Islam and raise him with good morals<sup>30</sup>. In fact, Koroğlu is lying, and the only reason behind his kidnapping of Ayvaz is his irresistible beauty, as explained in the rest of the story. With Koroğlu's statements to the Sultan, Ayvaz's Armenian identity, which is seen as a potential source of his "lack of good morals", turns into a reason to legitimize Koroğlu's crime. The salvation from this situation is through Ayvaz's conversion to Islam, but the fact that this issue of conversion is not mentioned anywhere in the narrative clarifies Koroğlu's trickery.

In the story of Kerem and Aslı, Aslı's father is a money changer of Armenian origin who works for Kerem's father, a shah<sup>31</sup>. It is noteworthy that in this narrative, as in many other places, the Armenian character initially becomes clear with the profession he pursues. Among the legends, the Armenian image draws attention with its fondness for work and production. In a legend, it is stated that an Armenian landlord even employed Sultan Murat, who went on a campaign to Yerevan<sup>32</sup>. These examples prove that craftsmanship and diligence, two intertwined concepts, were used in the design of the Armenian image.

The identification of Armenians with the profession of architecture can be seen in a Bektashi anecdote. In the narrative, when Bektashi, who poured

---

29 Kaplan at al., *Koroğlu Destanı*, 16.

30 Kaplan at al., *Koroğlu Destanı*, 65.

31 Duymaz, *Kerem ile Aslı*, 255.

32 Seyidoğlu, *Erzurum Efsaneleri*, 196.

water on the wall of the mosque, was told that what he did was very wrong, Bektashi stated that Kirkor Bodus built that wall and that God Almighty created his own body<sup>33</sup>. In this narrative, it is seen that Bektashi is trying to pull himself into a rightful position by making use of stereotypes. When Bektashi's use of negative stereotypes about Armenians in the anecdote is supported by the Bektashi type's general tendency to perform actions that the tradition does not find appropriate, a social idea that negative discourses towards Armenians are wrong emerges.

Agop in the Bekri Mustafa jokes appears as a dishonest shopkeeper who secretly adds water to drinks. In this paragraph, he is punished by Bekri and decides not to commit such a fraud again<sup>34</sup>. In some examples, after the self-interest of the Armenian image is clearly shown, the criminal is punished with divine help. In a legend told in Bayburt, an Armenian who is engaged in agriculture sells grass to the Muslim livestock communities around him. Muslims, who could not find grass for their animals due to excessive snowfall, went to ask for grass from the Armenian merchant. The Armenian merchant asks for the daughter of one of the Muslims in exchange for the herbs he will give. With the girl's prayer, all the Armenian grass turns into stones in heaps<sup>35</sup>. In another legend compiled from Bayburt, the reason why a river with no more water left in its bed dried up is related to the disrespect towards bread, which is believed to be sacred in folk culture, and the origin of this disrespect is associated with the Armenians. According to legend, an Armenian bride uses a piece of bread while cleaning her child's diaper and then throws this bread into the water. From that day on, the water in the river gradually decreases and after a while the stream retreats underground, its sound can be heard but the water cannot be seen<sup>36</sup>. In this narrative, the fact that the figure who angers nature by not complying with social norms is Armenian can be read as the emergence of two different stereotyping dynamics at a single point.

The legendary hero, who is pushed outside of us with the potential of being Armenian, violates a prohibition that is considered a taboo in folk culture, disrespects bread and is punished as a result. According to the contextual memory that created this text, the violation of the taboo and the identity involved coincide with each other. It should not be forgotten that the figure that appears as Armenian in the context of Bayburt may also appear with a completely different label in another context.

33 Dursun Yıldırım, *Türk Edebiyatında Bektaşî Fıkraları* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1999), 152.

34 Emeksiz, *Bekri Mustafa*, 180.

35 Sakaoğlu, *101 Anadolu Efsanesi*, 18.

36 Sakaoğlu, *101 Anadolu Efsanesi*, 29.

The issue of not being able to control sexual urges, such as disrespecting bread, is also associated with being Armenian. In a legend compiled from Erzurum, while a bride is in front of the door, an Armenian young man passing by the door wants to kiss her. He gives the name of Allah and says his wish, and the bride allows him to kiss her because of giving the name of Allah. In the evening, the bride tells the situation to her husband, the husband lights a fire and asks his wife to enter the fire by giving the name of Allah. The bride enters the fire, the fire becomes a lake and the bride becomes a fish<sup>37</sup>. Choosing a figure who molests a married woman from among minorities is to remind the members of the society that produced the text of their moral obligations. On the other hand, this narrative also shows that the sacred concepts of the Islamic belief system are decisive in the basis of the relationship established with minorities. At the end of the story, the fire turns into a lake and the woman turns into a fish; in fact, she shows that it is not wrong for a married woman to have an Armenian kiss her, relying on God. In other words, in fiction, the Armenian figure is made up by using the concept of “Allah” and is freed from the limitations of negative stereotypes clinging to it. This nuance means that the narrative carries a completely different aesthetic value deep down.

In a legend about the formation of the name Zara, when the Sultan went on a campaign with his army, he stopped in the Zara region, hosted an Armenian named Zara, and sent him wine and raki on camels to measure the sheikhship of a Sheikh living in that region with the Armenian’s filling. However, the Sheikh turns the wine and raki into honey and oil and sends it back to the Sultan, whereupon the Sultan appreciates him and says that he will fulfill his request. The Sheikh demands the death of the Armenian, the Sultan kills the Armenian, and that region is named after the murdered Armenian<sup>38</sup>. The desire of the Sheikh, who gained the Sultan’s approval by transforming alcohol, which was criminalized in this narrative, into foods such as oil and honey, which are culturally approved foods, was to kill the Armenians. Of course, it is not a situation that can only be explained by the difference of ethnicity. The Armenian is not killed just because he is an Armenian, he is punished for the crime he committed against the religious leaders. However, such outbursts are made in association with minorities as a result of stereotypical thinking. In addition, there is no maturity expected from a mystic here, which is another result of the legend being formed through a simple stereotyping dynamic. This dynamic combines slander with being an Armenian, but basically the text contains warnings to consumers that if they exhibit negative behavior such as slander, those who do so will be excommunicated. The Armenian image is an

---

37 Sakaoğlu, *101 Anadolu Efsanesi*, 109.

38 Metin Ergun, *Türk Dünyası Efsanelerinde Değişme Motifi* (Ankara: TDK Yayınları, 1997), 380.

element used in shaping this warning and may vary depending on different contexts.

In a legend compiled from Diyarbakır, a saint named Cebail Hoca wishes that Armenian women would come to his grave and distribute buttered bread there after his death<sup>39</sup>. This desire is the expression of the consciousness based on common history and shared experiences, which manifests itself in the term of “millet-i sadıka” that means loyal nation pattern mentioned above. On the other hand, Armenian figures who are not shaped by stereotypical thoughts can also appear in the narratives. In one legend, two farmers, Armenian and Muslim, are partners. At harvest time, they divide the produce and the Armenian children steal the property of their Muslim partners. Their father is very upset about this situation, and angels come from the sky at night and return the stolen goods, and their father is relieved<sup>40</sup>. In this last example, where the criminals were not punished, although the most important characteristic of those who behaved immorally was their Armenian identity, the sadness felt by their fathers can be considered a reflection of their common past and shared experiences.

Aslı's parents, who caused Kerem to pursue Aslı for seven years, finally see that they cannot prevent the marriage of these two young people and decide to hold the wedding. However, Aslı's father, called Keşiş, goes to the magicians and has a magic shirt sewn for Aslı. and dresses his daughter<sup>41</sup>. This situation causes Kerem's tragic end, which is highly reflected in popular culture. As a result of the buttons not being released until the morning, Kerem burns with a sigh of relief, and Aslı, who waited crying over Kerem's ashes for forty days, finally starts to fly and sweeps these ashes with her hair, her hair catches fire and she burns to death. The source of this sad ending is Aslı's mother and father. Some lines spoken by Kerem in the story show an awareness that the source of this evil is based on ethnicity. For example, Kerem talks about Aslı's mother by saying, “Aslı is Armenian, her mother is an infidel.” (Duymaz, 2001:278), and elsewhere he calls out to Aslı by saying, “Come and be a Muslim, don't stay Armenian.”<sup>42</sup>. He tries to remove it from the “negative” context it is in. This last statement shows that, at the time when the text was formed, religious identity awareness was intertwined with national identity awareness, which was not yet very strong. Keşiş's treacherous plan to kill his own daughter and son-in-law supports the stereotype of Kerem (and therefore Turkish society), who associates this situation with his Armenianness as one of the obstacles to being a good person.

39 Muhsine Helimoğlu Yavuz, *Diyarbakır Efsaneleri* (Ankara: Eğiten Kitap, 2013), 187.

40 Helimoğlu Yavuz, *Diyarbakır Efsaneleri*, 223.

41 Duymaz, *Kerem ile Aslı*, 292.

42 Duymaz, *Kerem ile Aslı*, 281.

In the narrative of Koroğlu and Demircioğlu, Koroğlu goes to Armanik the Blacksmith's shop to get his horse shod, and there he meets a journeyman named Demircioğlu and makes a show of power by taking the horseshoes he wants to shove on his horse and bending them. After this incident, Armanik saves Koroğlu from Demircioğlu, who tried to kill him at night to take revenge on Koroğlu, who introduced himself as Ali. The master predicts what his journeyman will do and hides Koroğlu in his mansion in the evening, allowing him to leave the city and preventing him from being killed by Demircioğlu<sup>43</sup>. This attitude of Armanik is proof that Armenians are not considered merely bad in the verbal memory of the Turkish society.

At the beginning of the story of Kerem and Aslı as in many other Turkish narratives there is an idea of childlessness. While a shah and one of his assistants were walking around the streets in disguise, a dervish came. Thinking that the Shah has no children, she gives him two apples. The Shah's Armenian assistant named Keşiş asks for one of the apples and promises to give the girl to the boy if the Shah has a son and he has a daughter. However, after the children became adults, Keşiş could not control his wife and left the city to avoid giving his daughter to the Shah's son Kerem<sup>44</sup>. In this part of the narrative, it is seen that the Armenian figure is designed to be open to criticism from two aspects. The first of these is that he does not keep his promise, and the second is that he cannot convey his promise to his wife. Especially in a cultural context where such texts are produced, a man's inability to control his wife is seen as a very "degrading" behavior, and this behavior is associated with the Armenian figure. The main issue that needs to be emphasized here is that her family does not want to give Aslı to a non-Armenian son-in-law. As a matter of fact, in different variants, it is seen that Aslı's family is trying to marry an Armenian young man<sup>45</sup>. This choice and search of the family constitutes the source of the tragedy at the end of the narrative.

The way to make the Armenian a part of our group is for him to become a Muslim. This can be seen as evidence that religion and national consciousness are intertwined within tradition. While the superiority of Muslims, especially in legends, is a motivation that derives from the talismanic holiness of Islam, the same situation can emerge as a coincidence in anecdotes. In one anecdote, a Muslim student who has no knowledge of religion passes by an Armenian's shop. At that moment, the Armenian trying to open the door of his shop could not do it and the Muslim young man said, "Oh sir, I can't open the door, they say everything is in your book." When asked, "What is the solution to open this door?", the student makes up an Arabic word. When the Armenian said

---

43 Kaplan et al., *Koroğlu Destanı*, 19.

44 Duymaz, *Kerem ile Aslı*, 256.

45 Duymaz, *Kerem ile Aslı*, 69.



this and tried to open the door again with the key, by chance the door opened and the Armenian became a Muslim. Bektashi, who saw all this happening, said, “O Lord, you were going to convert this Armenian to Islam, but what was the point in turning this student into an infidel? He criticizes the student who is unaware of Islam, even though he is accepted as the representative of Muslims<sup>46</sup>. This criticism is important in terms of showing the society’s self-stereotypes because, within the binary opposition created through the Armenian tradesmen and the Muslim student, the fact that the student representing us is far from fulfilling his obligations is shown in a humorously critical attitude.

## Conclusion

As a result, it is understood that the Armenian image becomes evident in some examples of legends, epics, folk tales and anecdotes in the Turkish oral narrative tradition. The stereotypes about the Armenian image in the narratives and the individuals who make up the Turkish society; the ideas of avoiding behavior such as self-interest, breaking taboos, and slander are advised, and it is reminded that people who exhibit such behavior, which will negatively affect social life, will lose the chance of being a part of society.

It cannot be said that the Armenian image has distinct bodily qualities. The most extraordinary of the examples encountered is Ayvaz in the Koroğlu narratives, who is depicted as an extremely beautiful hero. However, the legitimacy of the Armenian’s beauty is always open to debate because he is not a Muslim. The Armenian image can often be presented within the village borders, in addition to urban living spaces such as taverns. On the other hand, one of the qualities that nourish the Armenian image is craftsmanship. Especially professions such as blacksmithing and masonry are associated with this image. The Armenian image is also associated with hard work. It is understood from the oral narratives that Armenian heroes did not have the option of making mistakes. As long as it remains within the boundaries of the group of “us”, the Armenian is an acceptable other. However, it is also seen that he is punished excessively in cases where he exceeds the limit.

Especially in the Bekri Mustafa and Bektashi anecdotes, the Armenian is positioned in more or less the same area as the main hero. Behavioral qualities associated with the Armenian image are often pointed out as the source of social problems. However, in these narratives, Islam, which is the essential element of our identity, is often pointed out as a safe space where the Armenian image, which occupies a “dirty” space, although controversial, can

---

46 Yıldırım, *Bektaşî Fıkraları*, 105.



always take shelter with submission. Behaviors that have the potential to negate the Armenian image can be legitimized when adorned with Islamic elements.

Situations in which negative behavioral patterns are associated with the Armenian image contain messages about how individuals within the borders of the we group should behave. In such uses, “Armenian” is used as an other label that has the potential to vary depending on its context. On the other hand, the Armenian image can also become evident as a tool used to express common past and shared values through its relations with Turks and Muslims who represent the group of “us”.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Balcı, Dilara. *Yeşilçam'da Öteki Olmak: Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye Sinemasında Gayrimüslim Temsilleri*. İstanbul: Kolektif Kitap, 2013.
- Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing*. London: Penguin Classics, 2008.
- Boratav, Pertev Naili. *Nasreddin Hoca*. İstanbul: Kırmızı Yayınevi, 2006.
- Brachfeld, Oliver. *Inferiority Feelings: In the Individual and the Group*. London: Routledge, 2014.
- Çelik, Adil. *Türk Anlatı Geleneğinde Stereotipler*. An Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi, 2019.
- Debord, Guy. *Society of the Spectacle*. London: Rebel Press, 1992.
- Duymaz, Ali. *Kerem ile Aslı Hikâyesi Üzerinde Mukayeseli Bir Araştırma*, Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2001.
- Emeksiz, Abdülkadir. *Bir İstanbul Kahramanı Bekri Mustafa (İnceleme - Metin)*, İstanbul: Mühür Kitaplığı, 2010.
- Ergun, Metin. *Türk Dünyası Efsanelerinde Değişme Motifi*. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 1997.
- Ergüven, Mehmet. *Görmece*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 1998.
- Helimoğlu Yavuz, Muhsine. *Diyarbakır Efsaneleri*. Ankara: Eğiten Kitap, 2013.
- Kaplan, Mehmet; Akalın, Mehmet; Bali, Muhan. *Köroğlu Destanı (Anlatan Behçet Mahir)*. Ankara: Sevinç Matbaası, 1973,
- Kearney, Richard. *Strangers, Gods and Monsters: Interpreting Otherness*. London: Routledge, 2002.
- Millas, Herkül. *Türk Romanı ve Öteki: Ulusal Kimlikte Yunan İmajı*. İstanbul: Sabancı Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2000,
- Robbins, Vernon K., Melion, Walter S. and Jeal, Roy R. *The Art of Visual Exegesis: Rhetoric, Texts, Images (Emory Studies in Early Christianity)*. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2017.
- Sakaoğlu, Saim. *101 Anadolu Efsanesi*. Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989.

Sayın, Zeynep. *İmgenin Pronografisi*. İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi, 2003.

Ulağı, Serhat. *İmgebilim: Ötekinin Bilimine Giriş*. Ankara: Sinemis Yayınları, 2006.

Utley, Francess Lee. "Folk Literature: An Operational Definition", *The Study of Folklore* (ed: Alan Dundes). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965.

Yıldırım, Dursun. *Türk Edebiyatında Bektaşî Fıkraları*. Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1999.

Yücel, Halime. *İmgeden Yoruma*. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2013.

## RESEARCH ARTICLE / ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ

**To cite this article:** Alizada, Nazrin. “Iran and the South Caucasus: The 44-Day Karabakh War in the Changing Geopolitical Equation”, *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 50 (2024): 141-162.

**Received:** 23.09.2024

**Accepted:** 29.10.2024

# IRAN AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: THE 44-DAY KARABAKH WAR IN THE CHANGING GEOPOLITICAL EQUATION

(İRAN VE GÜNEY KAFKASYA: DEĞİŞEN JEOPOLİTİK  
DENKLEMDE 44 GÜNLÜK KARABAĞ SAVAŞI)

Nazrin ALİZADA\*

**Abstract:** *The Karabakh issue, which appeared between the two Transcaucasian countries Azerbaijan and Armenia and resulted in the occupation of the former's lands, has become one of the significant issues in the geopolitical equation. In this context, the attitude of Iran, one of the regional actors, towards this problem has attracted special attention. Since Iran accepts the South Caucasus region, especially Azerbaijan, as a part of its historical plateau, that's why it has been closely interested in the wars that happened in the region.*

*Considering this, in the article will be first discussed Iran's South Caucasus policy and the reasons that make the South Caucasus important for it; and then will be examined the Iran's stance on the Karabakh war; especially in 2020 and afterwards, after creating a background by briefly examining the historical process that led to the Azerbaijan-Armenia conflict over Karabakh. Additionally, Iran's attitude towards the Karabakh war in the context of the protectionist realism theory and the conflicting discourse-action rhetoric of the state in question are detailed. In parallel, the main findings of this article are that especially when it comes to the Karabakh*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6874-7712>  
Dr., Hatay Mustafa Kemal University E-mail: nazrin.alizada@mku.edu.tr

*issue, Iran shaped its South Caucasus strategy and its attitude towards the war; in the light of attitudes of regional actors and the new geopolitical equation that emerged. In this context, the hypothesis of the article is based on Iran's biased and neutral stance during the recent Karabakh war between Azerbaijan and Armenia in the South Caucasus.*

**Keywords:** Iran, South Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Karabakh War

**Öz:** İki Transkafkasya ülkesi Azerbaycan ve Ermenistan arasında meydana gelen ve adı geçen ilk devletin topraklarının işgaliyle sonuçlanan Karabağ meselesi jeopolitik denklemde adından bahsettiren özel öneme haiz konulardan biridir. Bu bağlamda bölgesel aktörlerden İran'ın konuya yönelik tutumu dikkatleri çekmiştir. İran; Güney Kafkasya bölgesini, özellikle Azerbaycan'ı kendi tarihi platosunun bir parçası olarak gördüğünden söz konusu bölgede meydana gelen savaşlarla da yakından ilgilenmiştir.

Karabağ konusunda Azerbaycan-Ermenistan çatışmasına götüren tarihi süreci kısaca irdeleyerek bir arka plan oluşturduktan sonra incelemeye tabi tutulan bu çalışmada ilk önce İran'ı Güney Kafkasya'ya doğru iten dinamikler ele alınmış, devamında ise özellikle 2020 yılı ve sonrasında meydana gelen Karabağ Savaşı'na yönelik İran'ın korumacı realizm teorisi bağlamında sergilediği tutum ve söz konusu devletin çatışan söylem- eylem retoriği detaylandırılmıştır. Ayrıca çalışma kapsamında İran'ın Güney Kafkasya stratejisini ve özellikle Karabağ meselesi söz konusu olduğunda savaşa yönelik tutumunu, bölgesel aktörler ve oluşan yeni jeopolitik denklem ışığında şekillendirdiği elde edilen esas bulgular sırasındadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İran, Güney Kafkasya, Azerbaycan, Ermenistan, Karabağ Savaşı

## Introduction

Iran is one of the major strategic and militarily powerful countries in the Middle East, but what connects it to the Caucasus is that it is a transit country for important trade routes from this region. Due to its geostrategic importance, one of the most important issues on the international and national agenda is the security problem in the region and its impact on Iran's political strategy. The security problem is a concept related to the ensuring of a security environment in order to meet the national interests of states and to ensure that the domestic policy strategy remains free from any risk of danger.

In this context, Iran sees Azerbaijan's strategic partnership with Türkiye, its desire to establish closer ties with the West and Israel, and the fact that this state has a secular government structure, despite the predominance of the Shiite sect, as a source of danger. At the root of this danger lies the possibility that hostile forces could use Azerbaijani territory as a springboard for military operations against Iran. Although this possibility is unfounded, developments in the South Caucasus region are worsening Iran's security concerns.

In this scope, there is a discrepancy between discourse-action rhetoric regarding Iran. In the case of the South Caucasus, Iran emphasizes the historical and religious aspects related to Azerbaijan, yet it sides with Armenia. In other words, while Iran-Azerbaijan relations are moving along the axis of incompatibility despite their religious fellowship, Iran-Armenia relations are progressing within the framework of sincere neighborliness.

In this manner, the hypothesis of this work is that Iran's policy towards Azerbaijan and Armenia in the South Caucasus framework has been based on a *biased and neutral stance* during the recent Karabakh War. In line with this hypothesis, the main purpose of the study is to first analyze Iran's South Caucasus policy in general and the factors that make the region important for Iran, and specifically examine Iran's attitude towards the Karabakh War, and also to elaborate on Iran's strategy in the context of the recent Karabakh War.

Considering the complex nature of the subject, a qualitative method based on the analysis of dispositions was adopted in order to reach the relevant data. In this context, an inductive approach was used in the article.

Throughout the work, it can be said that Iran's stance towards the region is shaped on the axis of protectionist realism theory. Iran has attempted to preserve its existence by spreading the Islamic Revolution beyond its borders, to ensure its national security through geopolitical factors, and to establish its national integrity through the Persian language and Shiism, and has tried to

adapt to the changing post-Cold War environment in the South Caucasus with a pragmatic approach. In this context, Iran has attempted to approach the new geopolitical equation in the region from the security axis by putting aside its religious identity (ideological priorities). In parallel to this, Iran has developed its relations with Armenia in a gradually increasing course, while its relations with Azerbaijan have fluctuated. Iran's voicing of the status quo on the Karabakh issue from time to time, as well as its concern that the Turks living within its borders would be influenced in terms of national consciousness had a significant impact on this situation. It has also been observed that Iran, which bases its foreign policy on the ideology of revolution, can overlook its religious identity and sectist approach when it comes to the South Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan.

### Iran's South Cascasia Strategy

The South Caucasus, which is in the focus of interest of powerful neighbors, regional and international actors, as well as international organizations, has a fragile political and ethnic structure. The Karabakh conflict, characterized as a political and ethnic-based issue, has played a major role in this. Therefore, Iran has tried to make decisions by taking socio-economic and security concerns into account when determining its strategy in the South Caucasus. This is also due to the fact that Iran views the South Caucasus region as part of its historical interests.<sup>1</sup> In the article written by M. R. Jalili, Transcaucasia, which is referred to as the South Caucasus, is not mentioned as a region to be alienated for Iran. According to Jalili, the main reason behind Iran strategically gravitating towards this region today is that it has believed since ancient times that the South Caucasus is part of the Iranian plateau.<sup>2</sup>

In this context, while the three states of the South Caucasus regained their independence in parallel with the political developments in the international arena since the end of the 20th century, Iran's regional policy was revised by the Hashemi Rafsanjani government and the pragmatic era of Iran's foreign policy covering the years 1989-1997 began.<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, the foreign policy strategy revised by the Rafsanjani administration was characterized as an *initiative towards the South Caucasus and Northwest Asia*. At this time, it became necessary to answer the following question. When talking about newly

1 "Iran in the South Caucasus: Adjustment and Evolution", *Royal United Services Institute (Rusi)*, accessed February 26, 2021, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/iran-south-caucasus-adjustment-and-evolution>.

2 M. R. Djalili, "Iran and Caucasus: Maintaining Same Pragmatism", *The Quarterly Journal* 1, no.3 (2002): 49.

3 Е.Х. Калбизаде, "Прагматизм во внешней политике ирана и отношениях с Арменией", *История, Археология и Этнография Кавказа*, no.3 (2022):686.



independent states, did these states pose a real threat to Iran? Or were there other reasons that pushed Iran to such a change of strategy?

After the dissolution of the USSR, some groups in Iran wanted to take their place in the newly created regional order, and therefore, one group considered the dissolution process as an ethnic nationalist development. Another group perceived the developments within a religious framework and argued that Islamic states should come together under one roof.<sup>4</sup> As such, Iran has sought to regain its former political, economic and cultural influence with its northern neighbors in order to increase its influence in the region. Moreover, in this scope, it has aimed to play a key role in the political and economic restructuring of the region. In fact, this new situation created interesting partnership opportunities, especially in economic and political terms. In this regard, Iran has attempted to get its piece of the pie in the traditional big political game with Türkiye, and Russia to a lesser extent.<sup>5</sup>

In addition to this, the desire to control the nationalist movements between North and South Azerbaijan, which were ready to break out at any moment, were among the reasons that encouraged Iran to gravitate more towards the region. As it is known, the Gulistan and Turkmenchay Treaties of 1813 and 1828 divided the Azerbaijani territories into two parts, and thus the descendants of the same race began to live under the control of two different forms of government.<sup>6</sup> Since the Iranian state saw the North Azerbaijani Turks, who regained their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a triggering factor regarding their compatriots in South Azerbaijan, it preferred to increase its activity there by applying the “*keep your enemy close*” strategy, instead of staying away from the region it perceived as a threat.<sup>7</sup>

Another influential dynamic has been the cooperation between Azerbaijan and Israel, rather than its relations with the West, and the subsequent agreements on the supply of military ammunition. Iran, which called Israel the “little satan”, does not accept the absolutization of this state’s position in the South Caucasus and prefers the strategy of supporting Armenia against Azerbaijan. Above all, it is known that the South Caucasus is a region rich in energy resources. In this context, Azerbaijan uses the energy factor as a tool of political influence and implements Western-backed energy projects at the same time.<sup>8</sup>

---

4 C. Keremi, “Bazi bozorg-e cedit der Gefgaz ve peyamedhay-e emniyeti an Beray-e İran”, *Mecelleye-e Siyaset-e Defayi* 8, no.1-2 (1378): 12.

5 J. Zarifian, “Iran and Its Two Neighbours Armenia and Azerbaijan: Resuming Relationships under America’s Suspicious Eyes”, *Iran&the Caucasus* 13, no.2 (2009): 386.

6 “*Güney Azərbaycan tarixi məqalələr (1828-1917)*”, (Bakı: Elm Nəşriyyatı, 1985): 6-7.

7 А.Х.Ибрагимов, “Прагматичная внешняя политика Ирана на Южном Кавказе”, *Постсоветские исследования*, no.6 (2022): 621.

8 A. Tibold and V. Cillessen, “Geo-strategy in the South Caucasus”, *Clingendael Institute Report*, (2006):11.

This leads to geostrategic competition in the energy field. This hinders Iran's plan to capitalize on the energy resources in the South Caucasus at a time of increasing geostrategic competition in the energy field. This is the main reason why this country has put its economic projects on the agenda, especially in the context of Armenia.

As can be understood from the cases explained above, Iran has shaped its South Caucasus policy in the context of its political, economic and security interests through its opposition to the West/US and Israel. However, if we specifically examine its relations with Azerbaijan, it can be said that they are mostly formed in the context of the *South Azerbaijan, the Caspian and Karabakh question*.

The main dynamic shaping Iran's stance on the *South Azerbaijan* question stems from the concern over the ideology of Azerbaijanism. First of all, Iran sees the main source of the issue in the name of the Azerbaijani state. This issue was voiced at different times by the official circles in Iran, and even in 1918, when the Azerbaijan People's Republic was declared, Iran stated that the name Azerbaijan belonged to the south of the Aras River and that it would not recognize the state created under the same name in the northern part.<sup>9</sup> The Iranian administration even objected to the Azerbaijani officials concerning this issue, believing that the newly established Turkish republic had territorial claims against Iran.<sup>10</sup> Hamid Ahmadi also touched on this issue and emphasized in his book that the name Azerbaijan is unique to Iran and that problems related to this may arise in the future.<sup>11</sup>

As can be seen, Iran did not accept the name Azerbaijan in the context of its foreign policy strategy in the early 20th century. It focused more on the ideology of Azerbaijanism in the context of its revised foreign security strategy in the 21st century and wanted to especially make the South Azerbaijani Turks accept that it is not based on Turkishness and that Azerbaijani Turks are Turkified Iranians. The most important reason for this is that approximately 30 million Azerbaijani Turks live in Iran<sup>12</sup> and they want to unite with their compatriots in the North. The other reason is to prevent other ethnic groups within Iran from gravitating towards their compatriots living across the border.

In this context, the Iranian government has tried to limit and restrict the Azerbaijani Turks and first referred to the Azerbaijani Turks living in Iran as

9 S. Yusifova, S. "The Recognition of the Independence of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in Paris Peace Conference and the Attitude of Iran", *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no.19 (2014): 356.

10 T. Nüsretoğlu and O. Alizade, "İran'ın Azerbaycan Siyaseti; Karabağ Savaşları Örneğinde", *Cihannüma Sosyal Bilimler Akademik Dergisi* 1, no.1, (2022): 130.

11 H. Ahmadi, "İran: Ulusal Kimlik İnşası", (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2009):192.

12 J. Minahan, "Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations", (Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002): 1765-1766.

*Azeris*. With this, the strategy of making the South Azerbaijani Turks forget their identity gained momentum. Subsequently, a newspaper called *Iran-i Juma*, which is affiliated with Iran's official news agency IRNA, tried to send them a social message by including a caricature in which Azerbaijani Turks were referred to as *cockroaches*.<sup>13</sup> An attempt was made to create a perception that the language of the insect that speaks in Azerbaijani Turkish is not understood and that they should be killed in order to prevent such a conflict in Iran, which led to protests by Azerbaijani Turks.<sup>14</sup> As a result, tear gas was used by Iranian security forces against the protesters and the newspaper responsible for publishing the caricature was shut down to prevent the protests from escalating further.<sup>15</sup>

With these protests, which were referred to as the caricature crisis, the Iranian administration saw for the first time that Azerbaijani Turks were united as a whole when it came to Turkishness. The second most obvious example of this was during the Karabakh War in September 2020. The fact that the Iranian administration, which claimed to be neutral during this war, did not close the Nurdz Border Gate<sup>16</sup> and supported Armenia under the name of food aid from here led to protests by the Turks of South Azerbaijan. Chanting slogans such as “*We are not on the side of Azerbaijan, we are Azerbaijanis*”, the South Azerbaijani Turks expressed their unconditional support for Azerbaijan in the Karabakh War.<sup>17</sup> This is a clear indication of why Iran is sensitive regarding South Azerbaijan.

The *Caspian basin* is both rich in hydrocarbon reserves and geostrategically important.<sup>18</sup> As a buffer zone, the Caspian's energy resources are diversified through pipeline projects, while the littoral states benefit from this within the framework of their legal rights. However, such a strategically important region has long had an unresolved legal status issue. Due to the intransigent attitude of the littoral states grouped along the axis of Russia-Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan and Iran-Turkmenistan, this issue has been negotiated in bilateral and multilateral talks for many years. In particular, the Iranian side has argued for

13 O. Erkan, “Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti’nin Kurulmasının Güney Azerbaycan Türklerine Yansımaları”, *21. Yüzyılda Eğitim ve Toplum* 12, no.36 (2023):851.

14 “Iran: Cartoon Protests Point to Growing Frustration among Azeris”, *RFERL.org*, accessed May 31, 2006, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1068797.html>.

15 İran’da Karikatür Krizi”, *BBC*, accessed May 23, 2006, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2006/05/060523\\_iran\\_cartoon.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2006/05/060523_iran_cartoon.shtml).

16 Yalçın Sarıkaya, “İran’ın İkinci Karabağ Savaşı Tutumu: Takke Düştü Kel Göründü”, *Giresun Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 7, no.1, (2021):94.

17 “Baku’s Successes on Battlefield Echoing Among Azerbaijanis of Iran”, *Jamestown Foundation*, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/bakus-successes-on-battlefield-echoing-among-azerbajianis-of-iran/>.

18 F. Oral, “Role of the Caspian Region within the Context of Energy Security”, *Bölgesel Araştırmalar Dergisi* 6, no.2 (2022): 422.

the equal use of the Caspian Sea, that the 1921 and 1940 agreements provide sufficient background on the issue and that there is no need for new regulations.<sup>19</sup> One of the main reasons for Iran's position on the legal status was its desire to bypass Western-backed energy projects, to get a larger share of the Caspian Sea, and to strengthen its hand economically and strategically. However, at a time when the international conjuncture was complicated, Iran made concessions on the issue of the Caspian Sea's legal status in order to get rid of the containment strategy implemented against it by the US and the West and to establish a problem-solving position as a regional actor, and this issue was resolved in 2018.<sup>20</sup> With this, Iran and Azerbaijan, which have been on different axes regarding the Caspian issue for many years, were able to find common ground.

The other important and most fundamental factor is related to the Karabakh issue. Since this issue is directly related to the subject of this article, it is discussed in detail below.

### The Historical Period That Led To The Karabakh War

All so-called conflicts between states have a historical background. The Karabakh War is also treated as a frozen conflict in some sources and as an ethnic conflict in others. So far, there have been four major wars between the parties. Additionally, small and medium-scale border disputes have continued from time to time. It is important to look at the etymological meaning of the region in question before talking about the Karabakh war in 2020 and after, which is the subject of the research, in order to prevent the spread of distorted information on the subject.

The word Karabakh, which is shown as an integral part of the *Greater Armenia* strategy (which has been transformed into a project by Armenians since the beginning of the 20th century) etymologically belongs to the Turks. The first two syllables of the word Karabakh, *kara*, means *thick, dark, big* not only in Azerbaijani Turkish but also in different Turkic dialects used by Turkic tribes.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, in the article titled "Nagorny Karabakh Conflict" written by H. Krüger, a comprehensive research was conducted on the ethnic groups living in the Karabakh region and their history. Karabakh was included in the Muslim state structures in the period following the dissolution of the Albanian state in the region. Afterwards, it was subjected to the occupation of the Mongols. In

19 A. Akdevelioğlu, "İran İslam Cumhuriyeti'nin Orta Asya ve Azerbaycan Politikaları", *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 1, no.2 (2004): 144.

20 F.Ş. Kahraman, "Hazar Denizi'nin Hukuki Statüsü", *KAÜİİBFD* 11, no.21(2020):437.

21 Y. Mahmudov and K. Şükürov, "*Qarabağ: Real tarix, faktlar, sənədlər*", (Bakı: Təhsil Nəşriyyatı, 2005):11.

the following period, it was a part of the Turkish states of Karakoyunlu, Akkoyunlu and Safavid.<sup>22</sup> In the 18th century, the region was included in the Azerbaijani khanates.

In general, the process of resettlement of Armenians in Karabakh corresponded to the period after the First Russo-Iranian War, and with it the process of resettlement of Armenians in Azerbaijani lands began. In fact, before the Treaty of Gulistan in 1813, the Karabakh khan had submitted to the Russian emperor with the Treaty of Kurakchay in 1805. With the Kurakchay Treaty, which was the beginning of the tragic fate of Karabakh, the Karabakh Khanate was placed under the protection of Russia.<sup>23</sup> According to the terms of this treaty, which is considered as one of the important documents on the relations between Russia and Azerbaijan, the Karabakh Khanate was deprived of the right to maintain relations with other foreign countries and it was decided to send one thousand chervons to the Tsar's treasury every year.<sup>24</sup>

With the Treaty of Gulistan signed as a result of the First Russo-Iranian War, the process of partitioning the Azerbaijani territories officially began. This process ended in the 19th century with the Treaty of Turkmenchay, which brought the end of the Second Russo-Iranian War. According to the treaty signed on 10 February 1828, the remaining part of the Azerbaijani lands was divided and the Russian-Iranian border line was determined.<sup>25</sup> Article 15 of this treaty is related to the Armenian question, which continues to this day. According to this article, the migration of ethnic groups living in South Azerbaijan to the South Caucasus without religious and ethnic discrimination was legalized.<sup>26</sup> Armenians were the most affected and they were forced to migrate to the aforementioned lands.

From this time onwards, Armenians began claiming rights and their organized and state-supported claims reached their peak in 1988. This led to the outbreak of the First Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia. It resulted in the loss of important locations in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and a ceasefire agreement was signed in 1994.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, the parties did not accept the

---

22 H. Krüger, "The Territorial Status of Nagorno-Karabakh," in *"Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict"*, (Berlin-Heidelberg: Springer, 2010):6-7.

23 A. Asker and S. Şeyban, "Kürekçay Anlaşmasının Tarihi Arka Planı, Hukuki Niteliği ve Siyasi Sonuçları", *Giresun Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 7, no.1 (2021): 45.

24 R. Sadıgov, "Çarlık Rusya'sının Azerbaycan'ı İşgali", in *Rus Dış Politikasında Orta Asya ve Kafkasya*, (ed) M.Mammedli, (Ankara:Nobel Yayınları, 2021): 11.

25 С. Байрамзаде, "Туркманчайский договор: искаженные географические названия", *История* 65, no.5 (2013): 23.

26 İ. Nuriyeva, "*Azərbaycan tarixi (ən qədim dövrlərdən bu günə qədər)*", (Bakı: Elm və Təhsil Nəşriyyatı, 2019): 242.

27 R. Dadaşova, "Armenia's Military Aggression Against Azerbaijan: Violation of the Rights of Captives and Hostages", *Avrasya İncelemeleri Dergisi-Journal of Eurasian Inquiries* 9, no.1, (2020):69.

plans and proposals put forward to resolve the conflict, and during this period, Azerbaijan's internationally recognized borders were violated by Armenia.

The second large-scale conflict between the parties broke out in 2016. This war, ignored by many sources, had significant results. Described in some sources as an unintentional military action and in others as a deliberate provocation<sup>28</sup>, this war broke out in response to Armenia's violation of Azerbaijan's borders, and some small but important regions were liberated from occupation by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces.<sup>29</sup> In fact, with this war, the Azerbaijani side has shown that it has the power through military force to take back the territories that it could not take back peacefully. In this respect, it would be accurate to consider the war that took place in 2016 as the event that paved the way for the Karabakh war in 2020.

The Karabakh War, called the *Homeland War* by Azerbaijan, occurred on 27 September 2020 and was covered by the international media with its impacts.<sup>30</sup> With this war, Azerbaijan legitimized the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on the settlement of the Karabakh conflict, which were adopted but not implemented, with its own military power.

As a result, after the liberation of the pearl of Karabakh, the city of Shusha, from occupation by the Azerbaijani Armed Forces, a ceasefire agreement was signed between Azerbaijan and Armenia on 9 November 2020 with the mediation of Russia on the cessation of all hostilities in the Karabakh region. In this framework, officials of the states parties to the conflict and President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin declared the terms of the agreement.<sup>31</sup> This agreement led to the deployment of Russian peacekeeping forces<sup>32</sup> in the region, under the control of which the Armenians were to be expelled from all occupied territories within a short period of time.<sup>33</sup>

28 C. Cavanaugh, "Renewed Conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh", *Contingency Planning Memorandum*, (2017): 2.

29 Sarıkaya, 86.

30 M.N. Alkan and M. Mehdizadehyoushanlouei, "Birinci ve İkinci Karabağ Savaşlarında Türkiye-Azerbaycan İlişkileri", *UPA Strategic Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2023): 218.

31 Ü. E. Ertuğrul, "2020 Azerbaycan-Ermenistan Ateşkesine Göre Yerinden Edilenlerin Dağlık Karabağ'a Geri Dönüşü", *Bilgi*, no.101 (2022): 60.

32 Immediately after the Trilateral Declaration was signed between the parties, the Russian Peacekeeping Force was sent to the region. Within this time frame, both the attitude of the Peacekeeping Force in Karabakh, which serves Russia's strategic interests, and the discourses created in Russia regarding Karabakh have shown that the rights of the Azerbaijani side have been violated. This brought to mind the question that the Russian Peacekeeping Force would not leave the region. Following the developments in the region, Azerbaijan launched anti-terrorist operations in 2023, especially after the Peacekeeping Force did not intervene against the provocative actions carried out by Armenians. With this, there was no need for the presence of the Russian Peacekeeping Force in the region. As such, the Russian Peacekeeping Force gradually began to leave Azerbaijan's territory. Read: A. Asker, "II. Karabağ Savaşı Sonrası Gelişmeler ve Rusya'nın Azerbaycanın Egemenlik Haklarını İhlali", in *Karabağ, Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını* (eds) O. Yeşilot, B.G. Köksal, (İstanbul: Selenge Yayınları, 2021): 326-331.

33 C. Abdullahzade, "Dağlık Karabağ Sorununda Ermenistan'ın Rolü ve Sorumluluğu", *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 69, no. 4 (2020):1566.



## The Karabakh War in September 2020 and Iran's Stance Afterwards

On 27 September 2020, as a result of military provocations made by the Armenian army against Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani army launched a large-scale military counter-offensive to ensure the safety of the civilian population. It is known that during this war, the Armenian army mainly used Russian weapons such as BM-30 Smerch, Tochka-U tactical missile system and Scud missiles, while Azerbaijan actively used Russian-made weapons, as well as modern Turkish and Israeli weapons and UAVs.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, during the war, Armenian forces attacked the cities of Ganja<sup>35</sup> and Berde using the above-mentioned missiles. As a result of the attacks, it is known that 9 civilians were killed in Ganja and 35 people, including children, were injured.<sup>36</sup>

Since the outbreak of the Karabakh War, Iran has expressed its support for regional peace and security. At the same time, Iran has emphasised that the inviolability of borders are Iran's red lines and Tehran will not tolerate any territorial changes in the region.<sup>37</sup> In addition, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir-Abdollahian made similar statements in early October in the midst of rising tensions with Azerbaijan. Another statement revealing Iran's stance towards the war was made by Shahriar Heydari, deputy head of the Iranian Parliament's National Security and Foreign Policy Committee. In an interview with Hayat analytical website, Haydari stated, *"Maintaining the border with Armenia and respecting the territorial integrity of Armenia is Iran's red line. But unfortunately, Azerbaijan, with the collaboration of the Zionist regime [i.e. Israel], Türkiye, and Saudi Arabia, seeks to change the geography of the region."*<sup>38</sup>

In the light of all these statements, it is revealed that Iran adopted a pro-Armenian stance during the Karabakh War in September 2020. It is necessary to address the reasons that led the country in question to adopt such an uncompromising stance.

Brenda Shaffer, who pointed out that Iran's policy towards the region is guided by five main factors, emphasized that among these dynamics, factors such as *national security, the influence of Turkish nationalism and the desire to become*

34 "44 günlük Qarabağ müharibəsi: Səbəb və nəticələr", *Air Center Hesabatı*, (2021): 8.

35 Ganja is a city located far away from the frontline zone. By targeting civilian populated areas, the Armenian side wanted to provoke Azerbaijan to do the same, but throughout the war Azerbaijan carried out military operations only in the Karabakh region.

36 Y. Acer, "The War Crimes of Armenia International Law and The Military Acts of Armenia in and around Karabakh", *SETA Analysis*, no.70 (2020):12.

37 "Iran Reaffirms 'Red Line' On South Caucasus Borders", *Azatutyun* accessed December 21, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31621670.html>.

38 "Shahriar Heydari: Maintaining Border with Armenia is Iran's Red Line", *News.am*, accessed September 19, 2023, [https://news.am/eng/news/781573.html#google\\_vignette](https://news.am/eng/news/781573.html#google_vignette).



*a regional transit center*<sup>39</sup> shaped the attitude of the state in question towards the Karabakh War in different dimensions periodically. In this respect, one can say that Iran's attitude towards the Karabakh War in 2020 and after was formed within the scope of some national and regional concerns.

The first one is that the new political and economic situation in the South Caucasus being shaped primarily by Azerbaijan and its strategic ally Türkiye as the victor of the war. Iran is concerned about the impact of this on the Turkic population. This is because, on the one hand, Azerbaijan has become a centre of attraction after the war with its military, defence, economic and energy investments, as well as its increasingly growing national consciousness.<sup>40</sup> In parallel with this, the fact that Turks living within Iranian borders supported Azerbaijan during the Karabakh War and chanted slogans such as *"Karabakh belongs to us and will continue to belong to us!"* on the streets has increased Iran's concerns on this issue.<sup>41</sup> This is because, according to Iran, these sociological effects will affect the balance of power as Azerbaijan regains control of its southern borders. Commenting on this, Dr. Musa Haqqani, President of the Iranian Research Institute for Contemporary Historical Studies, said the following: *"The Republic of Azerbaijan was initially established with the aim of dividing Iran, and we see the effects of this, especially in the context of the recent Karabakh War, in Khuzestan and other provinces. Azerbaijan encourages state separatism. In other words, the problem is not the first and second Karabakh War, the problem is that the main strategy of this state serves the scenario of Iran's disintegration. In this context, by raising the issue of Azerbaijan within the borders of Iran, an attempt is made to disintegrate the whole of Iran."*<sup>42</sup>

Another situation that Iran sees as a national security threat in the context of the South Caucasus is the development of Azerbaijan-Israel relations, including military-technical and security cooperation. This is because Israel is an essential arms supplier of Azerbaijan. This brings to the forefront issues such as internal balances and Israel, which is an enemy country, solidifying its presence in the region by cooperating with Azerbaijan.<sup>43</sup> Evaluating the Azerbaijani position on this issue within the scope of the protectionist realism theory, Iran considered this state as an export point of the Israeli military industry and drew attention to the fact that the Azerbaijani army is under the

39 B. Shaffer, "Iran's Policy toward the Caucasus and Central Asia", *The Central Asia- Caucasus Analyst*, (2022): 2.

40 Nüsretoğlu & Alizade, 142.

41 "Traktor azərkeşlərindən Azərbaycana dəstək şüarları: Qarabağ bizimdir, bizim olacaq!", *Press.az*, accessed September 4, 2020, <https://press.az/az/news/62944>.

42 Hoshdar-e ceddî-e karshenasan az saye-e tahdidat tahavolat Ghafghaz bar amniyyat İran, *Khabaronline*, accessed Azer 23, 1400, "<https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1582607/%>".

43 G.K. Yaşın, "The Caucasus in Iran's Foreign Policy", *AVİM Analysis*, no. 18 (2023):2.

patronage of Israel.<sup>44</sup> However, what was overlooked at the time is that Azerbaijani President İlham Aliyev has repeatedly reiterated at different times: *Azerbaijan will not open its territory to any threat to the sovereignty of another state.*<sup>45</sup>

The issue of the Zangezur Corridor, which Iran sees as an obstacle to its transformation into a regional transit hub, is another important reason for this state's distant attitude towards Azerbaijan. Following the opening of the corridor, Azerbaijan's land connection with Nakhchivan will be ensured and access to Central Asian states will be provided through this route at the same time. As such, Türkiye will be the state that will provide the connection. Commenting on this situation, Dr. Jahangir Karemi, a lecturer at Tehran University, pointed out that the events of recent years point to important developments in the geopolitics of the Caucasus and underlined that this is a pre-indication of geopolitical changes in the region. In this context, Karemi signalled that Türkiye's power will be redefined in the region and subsequently Russia's power may weaken.<sup>46</sup>

In particular, Iran, which, unlike all other countries, sees Türkiye as an actor that does not support ceasefire and deescalation in this region and displays an aggressive approach,<sup>47</sup> tries to protect its position as a transit country by opposing the opening of the corridor. This is because Iran is interested in playing an important role in the railway and road transport systems linking Asia and Europe, passing through Central Asia and the Caucasus, as well as serving as an export point for trade to and from the landlocked Caspian region.

In this context, the Iranian side has also expressed its concerns about the Zangezur Corridor, which will have a multiplier effect in the region. The Strategic Council on Foreign Relations in Tehran, whose director is Iran's former Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamal Kharazi, warned against the construction of the Zangezur Corridor in an article titled "*NATO's Conspiracy to Create the Torani Corridor*". In this article, the council indicated that the corridor's completion would have significant geopolitical consequences for Iran, Russia, and China. This corridor has been introduced to NATO's *Torani Corridor*," a project supported by Israel and NATO. Moreover, it has been

---

44 Abou Mohammad Asgarkhani; Sobhan Mohammadi; Mohammad Bagher Mokarrampour; Saleh Veisi, "Tehlil-e eqdam-e nezami-ye cumhuri azerbaycan der qebale mesele-ye nagorni gharabagh ve cumhuri artsakh, ve hemchenin berresi ecmaliye mevazee cumhuriye eslamiye İran", *Neşriyyeye Elmiye Modiriyet ve Pejuheşhaye Defai*, no. 92 (1400):171-173.

45 "Ermənistan-Azərbaycan Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin həllində Azərbaycanı zəfərə aparan yol", (Bakı: Qanun Nəşriyyatı, 2021):46.

46 Hoshdar-e cedit-e karshenasan az saye-e tahdidat tahavolat Ghafghaz bar amniyyat İran, *Khabaronline*, accessed Azer 23, 1400, 23 11:15 <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/15826>.

47 İbrahim Mearaji, "Tâsir-e tâarozat-e hoviyeti dar tashdid monazeât siyasi: Motalee moredi bohran Qarabagh", *Faslname Elmi Khavarmiyan-e 2*, no.104(1399): 21.

claimed that by building this corridor, Türkiye and Azerbaijan will fuel ethnic unrest in Turkic populated areas in Iran.<sup>48</sup>

The point that needs to be emphasised at this time is that if a state with regional objectives is trying to absolutize its position in the region in question, then it should transform the situation that seems to be against it in its favour or try to take a step forward by taking advantage of the benefits of the current situation. Considering this point, the Iranian side should not ignore the economic benefits that will arise after the opening of the Zangezur Corridor. However, despite all these, Iran has tried to justify its close relations with Armenia by drawing attention to the Armenian community living within its borders and emphasising that they have been living together in peace for centuries.<sup>49</sup>

In this framework, Iran's 64-kilometer border with Armenia has been turned into one of the most strategically important territories; by deploying approximately 50,000 troops to the border region in 2022, Iran has signalled to both NATO member Türkiye and neighbouring Azerbaijan that it will not tolerate any change in the borders in the region.<sup>50</sup> With this, Iran has made it clear that any action that would disqualify Armenia from being a neighbour is a red line.

While there is a tendency of rapprochement in Iran-Armenia relations as emphasised above, in the context of Azerbaijan, tensions between the parties have escalated considerably. The main incident that fuelled this tension was the attack on the Azerbaijani Embassy in Iran. On 27 January 2023, the Azerbaijani Embassy in Tehran was attacked with automatic weapons, and the Azerbaijani side declared that this act was a terrorist attack, evacuated the embassy staff and the body of the deceased security chief from the country and brought the incident to the agenda of international institutions and society.<sup>51</sup> Iran, on the other hand, claimed that the incident was caused by personal enmity. However, due to the very poor response of the Iranian security forces during the attack, Azerbaijan did not accept Iran's statements and emphasised that the attack was the last link in the hostile rhetoric and behaviour against Azerbaijan for the last two and a half years.<sup>52</sup>

48 "NATO's Conspiracy to Create the Torani Corridor", *SCFR.ir*, accessed December 23, 2023, <https://www.scfr.ir/fa/300/30101/145964/ایجاد دالان و رانی ناتو با پیما>

49 Sarıkaya, 93.

50 "The Zangezur Corridor: A Pathway for Prosperity or to War?", *Energy Intelligence*, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.energyintel.com/0000018b-37c7-d20c-a9ef-bfd44760000>.

51 "Terrorist Attack on the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Iran", *Bulletin of Air Center* (2023):2.

52 "Past and Present of Iran-Azerbaijan Tension", *IRAM*, accessed February 13, 2023, [https://iramcenter.org/en/past-and-present-of-iran-azerbaijan-tension\\_en-2216](https://iramcenter.org/en/past-and-present-of-iran-azerbaijan-tension_en-2216).

In the light of the developments in the region in 2023, Iran, whose relations with Azerbaijan have started to suffer significantly, signalled a change in its strategy. Analyzing this situation, Dr. Vali Kaleji, a member of the Institute for Iran & Eurasia Studies (IRAS) Scientific Council, pointed out that relations between Tehran and Baku have long been volatile and that despite the perception of mutual threats, the frequent tensions between the two countries have not gotten out of control and have not led to a military conflict. Kaleji pointed out that the relations between the two countries have been in a continuous cycle of *escalation and deflation* over the last three decades, and that there have been no military conflicts between the two sides, citing a number of reasons for this. The first main reason is the economy and trade. This is because more than 50 percent of Iran's trade with the South Caucasus is conducted through Azerbaijan, which is almost equivalent to the combined trade of Armenia and Georgia.<sup>53</sup> This makes the country an important economic and trade partner of Tehran in the region. The second factor that plays an important role in deescalation is the issue of transit and transportation. Iran is the only direct and low-cost transit route for Azerbaijan to reach the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the countries of the Arab world and especially Pakistan, which has a close and strategic partnership with Baku. The third factor relates to the significant strengthening of Türkiye, especially the Baku-Ankara axis, in the aftermath of the Karabakh War in late 2020. In this case, if Iran exerts undue pressure on Azerbaijan, it could put Baku in a security and strategic dilemma, with the likely consequence of further strengthening military and security ties with Türkiye and Israel.<sup>54</sup> Taking these dynamics into account, Iran changed its strategy with regard to Azerbaijan, which was concretized by the events of September 2023.

In this context, it would be appropriate to briefly mention the developments in the region in 2023. Armenian armed groups violated the agreement signed between the parties after the Karabakh War and committed provocative acts against members of the Azerbaijani army.<sup>55</sup> As such, Azerbaijan launched anti-terrorist operations on 19 September 2023.<sup>56</sup> Commenting on the events, Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson Nasser Kanaani called for an end to the conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which border Iran, and

53 "Shabake-ye pichid-e vabastegi motaghabel va movazene-ye tahdid miyan Cumhuri Eslami İran ve Cumhuri Azerbaycan", *İras*, accessed Ferverdin 19, 1402, شبک - پیچیده وابستگی - مقابل - و - موازنه

54 Ibid.

55 O. Ağır, "Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu Bağlamında Türk Dünyası Jeopolitiği", *İnönü Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 12, no.2 (2023):236.

56 "No: 229, 19 September 2023, Press Release Regarding the Military Operation Launched by Azerbaijan in Karabakh" Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, accessed September 19, 2023, [https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_229\\_azerbaycan-tarafindan-karabag-da-baslatilan-askeri-operasyon-hk.en.mfa#:~:text=Due%20to%20the%20long%2Dstanding,operation%20which%20targets%20exclusively%20military.](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_229_azerbaycan-tarafindan-karabag-da-baslatilan-askeri-operasyon-hk.en.mfa#:~:text=Due%20to%20the%20long%2Dstanding,operation%20which%20targets%20exclusively%20military.)

to abide by the ceasefire agreement and offered to mediate the conflict.<sup>57</sup> In parallel with these developments, former Iranian President Ibrahim Reisi gave the green light to the development of bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Iran, saying that no conspiracy could break the ties between the two peoples. The former president said that a diplomatic solution is the normal way to resolve the conflict from now on. In his meetings with Armen Grigorian, Secretary of the Armenian Security Council, and Khalaf Khalafov, Representative of the President of Azerbaijan on Special Assignments, on 4 October 2023, the former president informed both sides that Iran sees the concept of the Zangezur Corridor as a “springboard” to resolve the conflict. He also emphasized the viability of the 3+3 format, which brings together Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia on the one hand and three regional actors on the other.<sup>58</sup>

Commenting on such a change in Iran's strategy, Dr. Karemi pointed out that negotiating the role of this state in the 3+3 Format could have many consequences for Iran and emphasized that Iran's lack of serious interest in this format could pose considerable challenges for Iran in domestic, border and regional issues.<sup>59</sup> This is because the 3+3 Format Platform could open up an important commercial market between Iran and Türkiye. At the same time, the states that make up this group could form a new economic alliance with enormous energy supplies. Taking all these into consideration, Iran is trying to show that it is not outside of the events taking place in the South Caucasus and that it still has a say in the region as an important factor in the resolution process.

## Conclusion

Iran's ancient imperial and expansionist ambitions are still evident in its contemporary policies. Historical evidence of this ambition still exists, especially north of the Aras River. Religious and ethnic ties between the two states, especially in the context of Azerbaijan, and economic and political interests in the case of Armenia, have come to the fore. Taking all these into account, it is understandable why Iran revised its South Caucasus strategy after the Karabakh War in line with regional conditions.

57 “World Reacts amid Azerbaijan-Armenia Tensions over Nagorno-Karabakh Attack”, *Aljazeera*, accessed September 19, 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/19/world-reacts-as-azerbaijan-launches-attack-in-nagorno-karabakh/>.

58 “İran mokhalefe esteghrar māmuriyat Nezaratı Ettehadiye Orupa dar emtedad marz Ermanestan vâ Azarbaijan nist”, *İras*, accessed Farvardin 14, 1402, <https://www.iras.ir/20%ايرانمخالفاسدقرارمامريتخطراتي-ات>.

59 “Karami: Agar be masael marzi tavajjoh nakonim ba chaleshshaye jeddi movajeh khahim bud”, *Khabaronline*, accessed Dei 21, 1402, <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1582195/اگر-به-مسائل-مرزی-توجه-نماییم-با-چالشهای-جدیدی-مواجه-خواهیم-کرد>

After the 44-day Karabakh War, the new geopolitical conditions that emerged in the South Caucasus, especially the strengthening of Türkiye in the region, the deepening of Israeli and Azerbaijani relations, and Iran's perception that it was marginalized in many issues, including the Zangezur corridor, led the country's political elite to search for a new solution. In this context, it can be said that one of the main reasons for the problems in Iran's policy towards the region and especially towards Azerbaijan in recent years is the inability to find a place for itself in the new regional configuration. At the same time, Iran's lack of power to significantly influence the processes in the South Caucasus has also played a major role in this.

This being the case, Iran has preferred to exert pressure on Azerbaijan through Armenia instead of directly pressuring Azerbaijan to change its stance. In this way, Iran is trying to keep Baku under control and show that it is still a significant actor in the South Caucasus. However, Iran should also take into account that there are many factors limiting Iran's influence over Armenia and that this strategy is unlikely to succeed in the long run. For this reason, Iran has tried to maintain or reestablish diplomatic channels with this state, especially after the anti-terrorist operations carried out by Azerbaijan in 2023.

At the same time, Iran also plans to become one of the guarantors of Armenia's security in the coming years and to have a say in Azerbaijan-Armenia relations through its influence on Yerevan. Another important factor pushing Iran towards this strategy is Israel becoming a part of the region's security structure. In this context, Iran was concerned that a new front would be created by Azerbaijan in the South Caucasus in parallel to Israel's containment strategy against Iran in the Gulf countries and the Kurdish region of Iraq. For this reason, Iran has sometimes tried to influence Azerbaijan by using Shiism and sometimes by using the Armenia trump card.

However, considering the changes in the South Caucasus in general and Azerbaijan in particular, it does not seem realistic to say that a serious and long-term softening or change in Iran's South Caucasus and Azerbaijan policy will take place as long as Azerbaijan's strategic relations with Türkiye and Israel continue and the nature of the regime in Iran does not change significantly.

## Bibliography

- Abdullahzade, C. “Dağlık Karabağ Sorununda Ermenistan’ın Rolü ve Sorumluluğu”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi* 69, no.4 (2020):1541-1568.
- Acer, Y. “The War Crimes of Armenia International Law and The Military Acts of Armenia in and around Karabakh”, *SETA Analysis*, no.70 (2020):7-15.
- Ağır, O. “Dağlık Karabağ Sorunu Bağlamında Türk Dünyası Jeopolitiği”, *İnönü Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 12, No.2 (2023):222-239.
- Ahmedi, H. “İran: Ulusal Kimlik İnşası”, İstanbul:Küre Yayınları, 2009.
- Akdevelioğlu, A. “İran İslam Cumhuriyeti’nin Orta Asya ve Azerbaycan Politikaları”, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi* 1, no.2 (2004): 129-160.
- Alkan, M.N. and Mehdizadehyoushanlouei, M. “Birinci ve İkinci Karabağ Savaşlarında Türkiye-Azerbaycan İlişkileri”, *UPA Strategic Affairs* 4, no. 2 (2023):204-227.
- Asgarkhani, A.M; Mohammadi S; Mokarrampour, M.B; Veisi, S, “Tehlil-e eqdam-e nezami-ye Cumhuri Azerbaijan der qebale mesele-ye Nagorni Gharabagh ve Cumhuri Artsakh, ve hemchenin berresi ecmaliye mevazee cumhuriye eslamiye İran”, *Neşriyeye Elmiye Modiriyet ve Pejuheşhaye Defai*, no. 92 (1400):171-173.
- Asker, A. “II. Karabağ Savaşı Sonrası Gelişmeler ve Rusya’nın Azerbaycanın Egemenlik Haklarını İhlali”, in *Karabağ, Dünü, Bugünü, Yarını* (eds) O. Yeşilot, B.G. Köksal, İstanbul:Selenge Yayınları, 2021.
- Asker, A. and Şeyban, S. “Kürekçay Anlaşmasının Tarihi Arka Planı, Hukuki Niteliği ve Siyasi Sonuçları”, *Giresun Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 7, no.1 (2021): 34-50.
- Байрамзаде, С.  
“Туркманчайский договор: искаженные географические названия”,  
*История* 65, no.5 (2013): 22-26.
- Cavanaugh, C. “Renewed Conflict Over Nagorno-Karabakh”, *Contingency Planning Memorandum*, (2017).



- Dadaşova, R. "Armenia's Military Aggression Against Azerbaijan: Violation of the Rights of Captives and Hostages", *Avrasya İncelemeleri Dergisi-Journal of Eurasian Inquiries* 9, no.1, (2020):55-73.
- Djalili, M. R. "Iran and Caucasus: Maintaining Same Pragmatism", *The Quarterly Journal* 1, no.3 (2002): 49-57.
- Erkan, O. "Azerbaycan Cumhuriyeti'nin Kurulmasının Güney Azerbaycan Türklerine Yansımaları", *21. Yüzyılda Eğitim ve Toplum* 12, no.36 (2023):845-863.
- Ertuğrul, Ü. E. "2020 Azerbaycan-Ermenistan Ateşkesine Göre Yerinden Edilenlerin Dağılık Karabağ'a Geri Dönüşü", *Bilig*, no.101 (2022):5-86.
- Ибрагимов, А.Х.  
"Прагматичная внешняя политика Ирана на Южном Кавказе", *Постсоветские исследования*, no.6 (2022): 620-626.
- Kahraman, F.Ş. "Hazar Denizi'nin Hukuki Statüsü", *KAÜİİBFD* 11, no.21(2020):434-468.
- Калбизаде, Е.Х. "Прагматизм во внешней политике ирана и отношениях с Арменией", *История, Археология и Этнография Кавказа*, no.3 (2022):679-693.
- Keremi, C. "Bazi bozorg-e cedit der Gefgaz ve peyamedhay-e emniyeti an beray-e İran", *Mecelleye-e Siyaset-e Defayi* 8, no.1-2 (1378).
- Krüger, H. "The Territorial Status of Nagorno-Karabakh," in *Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict*, Berlin-Heidelberg: Springer, 2010.
- Mahmudov, Y. and Şükürov, K. "*Qarabağ: Real tarix, faktlar, sənədlər*", Bakı: Təhsil Nəşriyyatı, 2005.
- Minahan, J. "*Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations*", Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2002.
- Mearaji, İ. "Tâsir-e tâarozat-e hoviyyeti dar tashdid monazeât siyasi: Motalee moredi bohran Qarebagh", *Faslnam-e Elmi Khavarmiyan-e* 2, no.104(1399): 11-24.
- Nuriyeva, İ. "*Azərbaycan tarixi (Ən qədim dövrlərdən bu günə qədər)*", Bakı: Elm və Təhsil Nəşriyyatı, 2019.

Nüsretoğlu, T. and Alizade, O. “İran’ın Azerbaycan Siyaseti; Karabağ Savaşları Örneğinde”, *Cihannüma Sosyal Bilimler Akademi Dergisi* 1, no.1 (2022):127-149.

Oral, F. “Role of the Caspian Region Within the Context of Energy Security”, *Bölgesel Araştırmalar Dergisi* 6, no.2 (2022):419-439.

Tibold, A. and Cillessen, V. “Geo-strategy in the South Caucasus” *Clingendael Institute Report*, (2006):11- 17.

Sadıgov, R. “Çarlık Rusya’sının Azerbaycan’ı İşgali”, in *Rus Dış Politikasında Orta Asya ve Kafkasya*, (ed) M.Mammedli, Ankara:Nobel Yayınları, 2021.

Sarıkaya, Y. “İran’ın İkinci Karabağ Savaşı Tutumu: Takke Düştü Kel Göründü”, *Giresun Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 7, No.1, (2021): 84-103.

Shaffer, B. “Iran’s Policy toward the Caucasus and Central Asia”, *The Central Asia- Caucasus Analyst*, (2022): 1-8.

Yaşın, G. K. “The Caucasus in Iran’s Foreign Policy”, *AVİM Analysis*, no.18 (2023):1-7.

Yusifova, S. “The Recognition of the Independence of Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in Paris Peace Conference and the Attitude of Iran”, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences* 5, no.19 (2014): 355-364.

Zarifian, J. “Iran and Its Two Neighbours Armenia and Azerbaijan: Resuming Relationships under America’s Suspicious Eyes”, *Iran&the Caucasus* 13, no.2 (2009): 383-399.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Ermənistan-Azərbaycan Dağlıq Qarabağ münaqişəsinin həllində Azərbaycanı zəfərə aparan yol”, Bakı: Qanun Nəşriyyatı, 2021.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Güney Azərbaycan Tarixi Məqalələr (1828-1917)”, Bakı: Elm nəşriyyatı, 1985.

\_\_\_\_\_. “44 günlük Qarabağ müharibəsi: Səbəb və nəticələr”, *Air Center Hesabatı*, (2021): 6-12.

\_\_\_\_\_. “Terrorist Attack on the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Iran”, *Bulletin of Air Center* (2023).

“Iran: Cartoon Protests Point to Growing Frustration among Azeris”, *RFERL.org*, accessed Mayıs 31, 2006, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1068797.html>.

- “Baku’s Successes on Battlefield Echoing Among Azerbaijanis of Iran”, *Jamestown Foundation*, accessed October 22, 2020, <https://jamestown.org/program/bakus-successes-on-battlefield-echoing-among-azerbaijanis-of-iran/>.
- “Iran Reaffirms ‘Red Line On South Caucasus Borders’”, *Azatutyun*, accessed December 21, 2021, <https://www.azatutyun.am/a/31621670.html>.
- “Iran in the South Caucasus: Adjustment and Evolution”, *Royal United Services Institute (Rusi)*, accessed February 26, 2021, <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/iran-south-caucasus-adjustment-and-evolution>.
- “İran’da Karikatür Krizi”, *BBC*, accessed May 23, 2006, [https://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2006/05/060523\\_iran\\_cartoon.shtml](https://www.bbc.co.uk/turkish/news/story/2006/05/060523_iran_cartoon.shtml).
- “Shahriar Heydari: Maintaining Border with Armenia is Iran’s Red Line”, *News.am*, accessed September 19, 2023, [https://news.am/eng/news/781573.html#google\\_vignette](https://news.am/eng/news/781573.html#google_vignette).
- “Hoshdar-e ceddi-e karshenasan az saye-e tahdidat tahavolat Ghafghaz bar amniyyat İran”, *Khabaronline*, accessed Azer 23, 1400, <https://www.khabaronline.ir/news/1582607/%>.
- “NATO’s Conspiracy to Create the Torani Corridor”, *SCFR.ir*, accessed December 23, 2023, <https://www.scfr.ir/fa/300/30101/145964/%d8%aa%d9%88%d8%b7%d8%a6%d9%87-%d8%a7%db%8c%d8%ac%d8%a7%d8%af-%d8%af%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%86>.
- “The Zangezur Corridor: A Pathway for Prosperity or to War?”, *Energy Intelligence*, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.energyintel.com/0000018b-37c7-d20c-a9ef-bfdf44760000>.
- “Traktor azərkeşlərindən Azərbaycanca dəstək şüarları: Qarabağ bizimdir, bizim olacaq!”, *Press.az*, accessed September 4, 2020, <https://press.az/az/news/62944>.
- “Past and Present of Iran-Azerbaijan Tension”, *IRAM*, accessed February 13, 2023, [https://iramcenter.org/en/past-and-present-of-iran-azerbaijan-tension\\_en-2216](https://iramcenter.org/en/past-and-present-of-iran-azerbaijan-tension_en-2216).

[https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no\\_229\\_azerbaycan\\_tarafindan\\_karabag\\_da](https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_229_azerbaycan_tarafindan_karabag_da)

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/19/world-reacts-as-azerbaijan>

# THE OCCUPATION FORCES EVACUATING GAZİ AYNTÂB AS PART OF THE ANKARA AGREEMENT

(ANKARA İ'TİLÂFNÂMESİ BAĞLAMINDA İŞGAL  
GÜÇLERİNİN GAZİ AYNTÂB'I TAHLİYE ETMESİ)

Celal PEKDOĞAN\*

**Abstract:** *Ayntâb, which was occupied by the British on 17 December 1918 with fabricated reasons, was handed over to the French occupation forces on 5 November 1919, although it was not included in the Armistice of Mudros signed by the Istanbul government on October 30, 1918. During the occupation period between 17 December 1918 and 5 November 1919, the British collected explosives, cutting tools and equipment, including firearms and onion knives, and made the people vulnerable. The French occupation forces, which intensified and increased their violence and pressure on the society day by day, almost all of them, composed of Algerian, Senegalese, Tunisian and Armenian legionnaires, began to attack the morals and beliefs of the people. Mustafa Kemal, who came to Kilis just before the Armistice of Mudros and organized the people against the invasion that would begin, corresponded with the Kemalists in Ayntâb while he was in Amasya, had the “Defense of Law Associations” (Müdâfaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetleri) established there and started the struggle. The hot war between the Kemalists and the French occupation forces, which started on April 1, 1920, ended with the initiative of the “Sulh ve Selamet Cemiyeti”, which took orders and instructions from the Istanbul Government, and the*

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6207-7383>

Assist. Prof. Dr. Gaziantep University Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of History,  
E-mail: [pekdogan@gantep.edu.tr](mailto:pekdogan@gantep.edu.tr)

city center fell on February 9, 1921. However, Mustafa Kemal's struggle continued and France, realizing that it could not stand against the "Guerrilla War" due to military and economic reasons, made peace initiatives and finally, the Ankara Agreement was signed between Ankara and France on 20 October 1921. As a result of the Ankara Agreement, which we can consider as a complete Pyrrhic victory for France and a diplomatic success for Türkiye, Cilicia, which, in Mustafa Kemal's words, was "a piece of our soul", regained its homeland. The evacuations were made in accordance with Article 4 of the treaty, consisting of Christian representatives and Turkish representatives. It was carried out in line with desires and requests by means of 'mixed commissions'.

**Keywords:** Mustafa Kemal, Ayntâb, evacuation, Ankara, commission

**Öz:** İstanbul hükümeti tarafından, 30 Ekim 1918'de imzalanan Mondros Mütarekesi içeriğinde yer almamakla beraber, uydurma gerekçelerle 17 Aralık 1918'de İngilizler tarafından işgal edilen Ayntâb, 5 Kasım 1919'da Fransız işgal güçlerine devir edilmiştir. İngilizler 17 Aralık 1918-5 Kasım 1919 tarihleri arasındaki işgal döneminde kentte, ateşli silahlar ve soğan bıçağı dâhil, patlayıcı, kesici alet ve edevatı toplayarak ahaliyi savunmasız duruma getirmiştir. Toplum üzerindeki şiddet ve baskısını günden güne yoğunlaştırarak artıran Fransız işgal güçleri ki bunların neredeyse tamamı, Cezayirli, Senegalli, Tunuslu ve Ermeni lejyonierlerinden teşkil edilmişti, halkın ahlaki ve inanç değerlerine saldırmaya başlamıştır. Mondros Mütarekesi'nden hemen önce Kilis'e gelerek, başlayacak işgale karşı halkı örgütleyen Mustafa Kemal, Amasya'da iken Ayntâb'daki Kemalistlerle yazışarak orada 'Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetlerini' kurdurmuş ve mücadeleyi başlatmıştır. Kemalistlerle Fransız işgal güçleri arasında, 1 Nisan 1920'de başlayan sıcak savaş, İstanbul Hükümetinden emir ve talimat alan 'Sulh ve Selamet Cemiyeti'nin girişimi ile sonlandırılmış ve kent merkezi, 9 Şubat 1921'de düşmüştür. Ancak Mustafa Kemal'in mücadelesi devam etmiş ve 'Gerilla Harbi'ne karşı askerî ve ekonomik nedenlerden dolayı dayanamayacağını idrak eden Fransa barış girişimlerinde bulunmuş ve sonunda, Ankara ile Fransa arasında 20 Ekim 1921'de Ankara İtilâfnâmesi imzalanmıştır. Fransa açısından tam bir Pirus zaferi, Türkiye açısından diplomatik başarı olarak değerlendirebileceğimiz Ankara İtilâfnâmesi sonucu, Mustafa Kemal'in deyimiyle, "canımızdan bir parça" olan Kilikya, anavatan topraklarına kavuşmuştur. Tahliyeler, antlaşmanın 4. maddesi gereği, Hristiyan temsilcileri ile Türk temsilcilerden oluşan 'karma komisyonlar' vasıtasıyla arzu ve istekler doğrultusunda gerçekleştirilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Mustafa Kemal, Ayntâb, tahliye, Ankara, komisyon.

### Introduction

The British Commander-in-Chief, Vice-Admiral Sir Somerset Gough-Calthorpe, signed an armistice on 30 October 1918 aboard the British warship *Agamemnon*, which was anchored in the port of Mudros on the Island of Limnos in the Aegean, with the authority granted by the British Government, in agreement with his Allies and accredited representatives by the Ottoman government<sup>1</sup>. The imperialist states occupied the Ottoman Empire on the basis of this armistice, which was recorded in history as the “Armistice of Mudros”.

The French politician, Georges Leygues, said in the Chamber of Deputies that “The axis of French politics is in the Mediterranean. One pole is in the west through Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. The other pole should be in the east with Syria, Lebanon and Palestine”<sup>2</sup>. “The aim of France and Great Britain in the continuing of the war in the East, which began due to the ambitions of Germany, is the complete and final liberation of the peoples and indigenous peoples long oppressed by the Turks, their free choice, and the establishment of national governments and administrations taking their authority”<sup>3</sup>. In the context of these so-called policies, France, interpreting the relevant articles of the Mudros Armistice in line with its own interests, occupied the port of Iskenderun with a French fleet on 10 November 1918<sup>4</sup>. Although it was not written in the articles, Ayntâb<sup>5</sup>, which was occupied by the British on 17 December 1918 under the pretext of “finding feed for their animals and providing sustenance”, was officially handed over to the French occupation forces on 5 November 1919<sup>6</sup>, who arrived in the city on 29 October 1919 with the agreement<sup>7</sup> signed between them on 12 September 1919.

1 Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*, Cmd. 53 (1919). “Terms of the Armistices Concluded between the Allied Governments and the Governments of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Türkiye. Signed in duplicate on board His Britannic Majesty’s Ship “*Agamemnon*” at Port Mudros, Lemnos, and the 30th October, 1918.

2 Flandin, M. Étienne (1853-1922), *Rapport sur la Syrie et la Palestine*, Paris 1915, p. 3-8.

3 *Papers on British policy and the Arab movement*, British Library: India Office Records (I.O.R) and Private Papers, Mss Eur F112/277.

4 Kurkjian, Vahan M., *The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, New York, 1919, p. 1-2.

5 The word ‘Ayntâb’ in the Turkish archival documents, after being given the title of ‘Gazi’ by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye (T.B.M.M.) on February 08, 1921, it has been included as Gazi Ayntâb, then as ‘Gaziantep’. In archival sources abroad, it is mentioned as ‘Aintab’ and ‘Ain-Tab’.

6 Abadie, [Jean-Joseph] M[aurice], *Les Quatre Sièges d’Aintab*, Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle & Cie, 1922, p. 27.

7 Article 4 of the 8-article ‘Secret Treaty’ signed in Istanbul on September 12th, 1919 by Grand Vizier Damat Ferit Pasha on behalf of the Istanbul Government and J.Fresner and H.N.Churchill on behalf of the Government of Great Britain, immediately after the Sivas Congress, is as follows: “In return, the Turkish Government promised to guarantee British material support in Syria and Mesopotamia, if necessary, as well as the spiritual support of the Caliph in this region and in Muslim populated areas”. See: On May 14th, 1920, Lepissier, the French consul in Trabzon, sent a report to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the text of the secret treaty. *MAE* (Fransa Dışişleri Bakanlığı Arşivi), E-Levant (1918- 1929), Turquie, Vol.: 93’ten aktaran Ünsal Yavuz, “Fransız Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belgelerinde 12



The death of Martyr Kamil on 21 January 1920 created a highly combustible situation. Afterwards the death of “Dülgerzâde Mehmed Said” (who had been sent by Mustafa Kemal with the code name Şahin-Eagle) in Elmalı Bridge at the hands of the French on 21 March 1920 ignited a hot war within the city.

In the context of the oppressive, looting, burning, destructive and aggressive actions of the French occupation force consisting of Senegalese, Algerians, Tunisians and a large number of Armenians in the city, a hot war started between the French occupation forces and the Kemalists in Ayntâb on 1 April 1920. While this hot war was continuing, Admiral J. de Robeck, the British High Commissioner, in his letter dated 8.4.1920, numbered 496, which he delivered to Lord Curzon regarding the meeting in which Rear Admiral Webb and Mr. Ryan were present, stated that “On 7 April [1920], a letter arrived at the British High Commissioner’s office stating that Grand Vizier Ferit Pasha had come to power on a platform for subjugating the supporters of the national movement [Kemalists] who would not submit to the will of the Istanbul Government, (...) that Ferit Pasha had asked Admiral de Robeck for help in having the edicts and fatwas to be issued against the nationalists [Kemalists] distributed to Anatolia with the two planes available, that the government had promoted Anzavur to the rank of Pasha and that he wished to distribute to his men the uniforms in the warehouses, that Ferit Pasha asked the British High Commissioner for arms for Anzavur’s forces and the Admiral said that he would discuss the matter with General Milne; that the government said it would use full moral will, but force should be used against those who remained unyielding; that the movement against the nationalists [Kemalists] organized by Anzavur in the south of Marmara was the first weapon in the hands of the government and that it had achieved considerable local success, that Anzavur had occupied Bandırma a few days earlier, that the Istanbul government had legitimized his position by giving him the status of governor of Balıkesir, that Ferid wanted to know how much the Allied government would support him in organizing and using these movements..., that the Government requests that we ensure that he makes the best use of the movements by allowing the anti-nationalist [anti-Kemalist] forces to be equipped with military materiel, that these questions must be answered urgently, that others, for instance, whether or not regular troops that the Sadakat Government can command should not be permitted to move, and, regarding all of these matters, the new government [the government of Damat Ferit Pasha] has the right to request the full support of the Allies (to compensate for the lack of armed cooperation) in reasonable

---

Eylül 1919 Tarihli Osmanlı-İngiliz Gizli Antlaşması”, *Askerî Tarih Bülteni*, Yıl : 17, Ağustos 1992, Sayı : 33, p. 137-161 ; Foreign Office 371/5117, E 260’tan aktaran Sina Akşin, *İstanbul Hükümetleri ve Milli Mücadele*, İstanbul 1983, p. 573 ; Sait Molla’dan Mister Frew’e mektup, Birinci Mektup. Mektupta antlaşmaya atıfta bulunulmuştur. See : Gazi Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk*, Ankara 1927, p. 177-178. Krş., R. Salâhi Sonyel, “İngiltere Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belgelerinin Işığı Altında 1919 İngiliz-Osmanlı Gizli Antlaşması”, *Belleten*, C. xxxiv, No : 135, Ankara Temmuz 1970, p. 437-449.

*efforts to suppress the nationalists [Kemalists] who continue to resist its authority, and that this should be respected”<sup>8</sup>.*

While the hot war was continuing in Ayntâb day and night between the Kemalists and French occupation forces, it was stated that “*On 26 May [1920], the Grand Vizier visited the British High Commissioner, this was the first visit since the announcement of the terms of peace in Paris, the Grand Vizier first explained the position of the Government in the face of the national movement and stated that he complied with all the wishes of the High Commissioners in blaming the nationalists, Damat Ferit Pasha asked for permission to form and arm a force of 10,000 to suppress the Anatolian rebels [Kemalists], and said that he could make Izmit, which he had visited a while ago, a base of operations and subjugate Anatolia [Kemalists] within three weeks, the Grand Vizier will also talk to the High Commissioners of France and Italy about arming a force of 10,000 men, but he will not tell them about his secret conversation with the British High Commissioner*”<sup>9</sup>.

In the context of various opinions, thoughts and claims regarding the defense of Ayntâb, “starvation”, lack of “artillery” and “bullets” are brought forward. On 30 October 1918, with the Mudros Armistice signed by the Istanbul Government, the Turkish army was demobilized, their weapons were taken away from them, and the British occupation forces that occupied Ayntâb on 17 December 1918, collected all the weapons, including onion knives, from the hands of the people. Within the context of this fact, Selahaddin Adil gave the necessary answers to the claims of “lack of ammunition” and “lack of artillery” by explaining the current situation. Moreover, in a letter dated 23.9.36 (1920) to the Ministry of Defense, it was written: “*The Ayntâb Artillery Battalion has 8 cannons, which are the property of the battalion and are as follows: 3 Russian javelins, 2 ordinary javelins, 2 powerful javelins, 1 skoda javelin. There is also an additional schneider cannon in the battalion, the total number of which is 9 cannons*”<sup>10</sup>, which further clarifies the issue.

A fully equipped military supply convoy consisting of 400 camels arrived outside (in Ibrahimli) to break the blockade and enter the town, and the convoy left its position on the morning of 7 February. When the siege was about to

8 FO, 406/43, p. 289, No. 172’den aktaran, Şimşir, Bilal N., *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938)*, Cilt II Nisan - Aralık 1920), *British Documents on Atatürk (1919-1938)* Volume II April - December 1920, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara 1975, p. XXVII-XXVIII, 26-30. British High Commission, Constantinople, April 8, 1920.

9 FO, 406/43, p. 420-423, No. 296’dan aktaran, Şimşir, Bilal N., *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938)*, Cilt II Nisan - Aralık 1920), *British Documents on Atatürk (1919-1938)* Volume II April - December 1920, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara 1975, p. XLV-XLVI, 117-121.

10 ATASE., İSH, 795-68. Müdâfaa-i Milliye Vekâletine, 23/9/36 (1920), aded: 560., C[evap]: 19/9/36 (1920) tarih ve 3142/299 numarolu tele.

end<sup>11</sup>, Fevzi (Çakmak), Deputy Chief of the General Staff, sent a reply to the Second Corps Command, in cipher dated 7.2.1921, stating *“It is pleasing that those defending Ayntâb have found 10-days-worth of supplies again. It is necessary for the defenders of the town to stay in the town and continue the defense as long as food is available. And since taking all the defenders of the town outside before sunrise means leaving the town and the elderly, women and children who cannot participate in the defense to the enemy, such a move should not be allowed unless the supplies are completely exhausted. Since the troops are presently not available to take supplies to the town with an offensive, it is necessary to give up any new attempt in the next 10 days and give the troops the opportunity to rest and recuperate. In 10 days, it is likely that the 2nd Division will also be able to partially enter the Ayntâb area. If there is a way to smuggle supplies into Ayntâb, this should also be attempted. It is requested to inform the defenders of the town that new forces are on their way and to ensure that they persevere in their defense and fight to the very end by trying to procure supplies from within”*<sup>12</sup>. On 7-8 February 1921, Mustafa Kemal, the President of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, sent a telegram to the Central Committee of the Ayntâb Mudafaa-i Hukuk Organization (Countrywide Resistance Organization), in which he said, *“All kinds of attempts and sacrifices have been made and will continue to be made for the rescuing of our brothers from Ayntâb, who have sacrificially elevated the glory of Turkishness and Islam. Our forces abroad, which have been ordered to be reinforced with great force, are preparing to make a new and effective attempt very soon. I kindly request that the greetings and appreciation of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye be conveyed to the honorable people of the heroic Ayntâb”*<sup>13</sup>. With his message, the issue was clarified at the highest level.

Despite all these orders and correspondence, the members of the pro-French and religiously exploitative “Sulh ve Selâmet Cemiyeti” (Peace and Welfare Union), in accordance with Gubo’s declaration, *“.... Send a delegation of negotiators to the headquarters of the French Forces-Military in order to put an end to the war...”*, took immediate action and intensified their work. On 8 February 1920, they met with the commanders of the French occupation forces and left the headquarters to supposedly convey the written French demands to the representatives of the people. On 9 February 1920, the aforementioned “Union” went to the French headquarters in Ayntâb and signed the surrender documents at the feet of the French commander on the entrance stairs of the

11 Château de Vincennes, 1 K 208, Papiers Andréa, rapport du lieutenant-colonel Andréa sur la reddition de la ville d'Aïntab et sur l'exécution par les autorités turques des clauses de cette reddition, 2 mars 1921.

12 ATASE., İSH, Klasör No: 599, Dosya No: 153, Fihrist No: 2, 2-1.

13 T.B.M.M. Reisi Mustafa Kemal'den Ayntâb Şehri Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyeti Merkez Heyetine, C. 5/2/1337, 2/155 sayılı şifreye, 7-8/2/1337 (1921) tarihli verilen cevap. See: Adil, Selahaddin, *Hayat Mücadeleleri*, İstanbul 1962, p. 366.

building, having the existing document previously signed not by the people, but by collaborators<sup>14</sup>. By signing the agreement, the “Sulh ve Selâmet Cemiyeti” fulfilled all the demands in the declaration of the French commander Gubo dated 4 December 1920 and the city center fell on 9 February 1921. However, none of the Ayntâb Kemalists signed this agreement on 9 February 1921 and it was not accepted by the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye. On the other hand, “gangs armed with crowbars continued to fight back in the villages”<sup>15</sup> and the city was given the title of “Gazi” (Veteran) on 8 February 1921, as part of the principles and plan of the “National War of Independence” initiated and led by Mustafa Kemal.

### The Path Towards the Ankara Agreement

The French High Commissioner in Beirut, General [Henri] Gouraud, in a ‘very urgent’ telegram to Minister of Foreign Affairs Millerand dated 5 September 1920, stated that intelligence insisted that Turkish reinforcements, estimated at 8,000 men, would arrive soon, that the intelligence found the situation in the North alarming, that the local population and the Government of Istanbul were saying that Bolshevik forces were coming to intervene, that there was no significant support they could expect from the population, that the Armenians were forming mostly marauding gangs, that General Garnier-Duplessis stated ‘I would be grateful if you could tell me whether you accept the evacuation from the international point of view’, and that the Government of Istanbul could be asked to send a governor and other officials of the province to Cilicia<sup>16</sup> while its troops were still there, that this policy would provide an opportunity to obtain commitments from the Government of Istanbul concerning the economic privileges granted to France at the time of the surrender of Cilicia.<sup>17</sup> On 28 September 1920, [Henri] Gouraud wrote to Minister of Foreign Affairs M. Millerand, “... as my telegrams tell you, Cilicia is still a matter of great concern. And I am waiting for an answer to my question: Should we conduct

14 *L'illustration*, Samedi 19 Mars 1921; *Al-Takaddom*, 13 Février 1921.

15 Lohanizâde Mustafa Nureddin, *Hubb-ı İstiklâlin Abidesi Gaziayntâb Müdafaası*, Bâb-ı âli Cağaloğlu Yokuşu, Numero 38, 1340-İstanbul-1342, p. 370.

16 The region stretching from present-day Alanya to Kinet Höyük and surrounded by the Taurus Mountains to the north is known as Cilicia. Although it is not possible to specify the exact borders of Cilicia, in early times, it included Adana, Marash sanjak and its immediate surroundings. The region is referred to as “Çukurova” in contemporary Turkish documents. See: Pekdoğan, Celal. “Levant, Kilikya, Kemalistler Bağlamında Maraş Savunması.” *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 69 (2021): 71-102.

17 Le Général [Henri] Gouraud, Haut-Commissaire Français à Beyrouth, à M. Millerand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères. T. nos 1695 à 1702. Très urgent. Beyrouth, 5 septembre 1920, 13 h. 30., *Documents Diplomatiques Français 1920-1932*. 1920 (D.D.F.), Tome II, 19 mai-23 septembre / Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Corine Defrance, Traian Sandu] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 1999. p. 559-562.

a military evacuate of Cilicia or is there a possibility of our remaining there despite the agreement?”<sup>18</sup>

M. Millerand informed [Henri] Gouraud that *I have not yet been able to reply to your telegrams asking for the government's approval for the evacuation of Cilicia, in principle and for many reasons, both international and national, because, like my predecessor, I am there and I am openly opposed. The repercussions of a withdrawal under enemy pressure would have significant repercussions*<sup>19</sup>.

On 26 November 1920, a telegram from M. de Peretti de la Rocca, director of political and commercial affairs, to M. Paul Cambon, the French ambassador in London, emphasized *“the absolute impossibility of maintaining the Treaty of Sèvres; the need to negotiate without wasting a minute with the Kemalists, who alone represent Türkiye, and the necessity for the negotiations to be conducted by France, and that the basis of this negotiation should be our immediate withdrawal from Cilicia, subject to the guarantees given to the Armenian population; the internationalization of at least the Thrace region and the Smyrna region; the renouncing of all Turkish claims to Batumi and the recognition of the independence of the Caucasian republics; the rejection of the entire Bolshevik alliance; the gendarmerie, organized before the war, to carry out its activities under international supervision to ensure order in Türkiye and the protection of minorities; a proposal for a Franco-Turkish alliance”*<sup>20</sup> in the negotiations held by Mr. Franklin-Bouillon, who had just arrived from Istanbul.

It is understood from this correspondence that the French commanders, who captured the city center thanks to the “Sulh ve Selâmet Cemiyeti” operating under the “Istanbul Government” between 5 November 1919 and 9 February 1921, clearly understood that they could not succeed against Mustafa Kemal’s “Guerrilla Warfare”<sup>21</sup> and tried to negotiate by all means.

18 Général [Henri] Gouraud, Haut-Commissaire Français à Beyrouth, à Mon Cher Ami, Beyrouth, 23 septembre 1920, *D. D.F. 1920-1932*. 1920, Tome II, p. 667.

19 M. Leygues, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Au Général [Henri] Gouraud, Haut-Commissaire Français à Beyrouth 1. T. nos 946-949. Paris, 4 Octobre 1920, 15 h. 20. *D. D. F. 1920*, Tome III, 24 septembre-15 janvier 1921 / Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Corine Défronce, Traian Sandu] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 2002. p. 48-49.

20 M. de Peretti de la Rocca, Directeur des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, À M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, T. nos 6780-67821. Paris, 26 novembre 1920, 21 h. 15. *D.D.F. 1920*, Tome III, p. 341-342.

21 “Gerilla harbinin yapılış tarzı hakkında Heyet-i Temsiliye Riyaseti tarafından bu hareketla yakından ilgili birliklere verilen talimat”, *Harb Tarihi Vesikaları*, Yıl 5, Mart-1956, Sayı: 15, p. 1, 383 nolu vesika vdd.



The negotiations and disputes between the two states during the period between 9 February 1921 and 20 October 1921 when Mustafa Kemal was operating in the region are extremely important.

On 8 February, just before the fall of the city center on 9 February 1921, Briand (Aristide Pierre Henri Briand) sent a long telegram to General Pellé, the newly appointed high commissioner in Istanbul, inquiring about Franklin-Bouillon's proposals for an agreement with Ankara. In the telegram, Briand demanded answers to the questions "*The London conference could be an opportunity for a liberal gesture towards Ankara, presumably in agreement with Lloyd George. Should Commander Sarrou be put in charge of the Turkish gendarmerie and should the 114 Turkish prisoners held by the British in Malta be released?*"<sup>22</sup>.

Undoubtedly the most important development in this period was the agreement titled "L'accord Franco-Turc Politique, Militaire, Économique, sur les frontières entre la Turquie et la Syrie, 9 Mars 1921"<sup>23</sup> (The Franco-Turkish political, military and economic agreement on the borders between Türkiye and Syria, 9 March 1921) signed between Bekir Sami and French Minister of Foreign Affairs Briand on 9/11 March 1921. However, the Turkish Grand National Assembly did not ratify the treaty on the grounds that it was contrary to the National Pact. Moreover, on 4 April Berthelot telegraphed Istanbul and Beirut to inform them that the Turkish Grand National Assembly had rejected the treaty. He therefore asked [Henri] Gouraud and Pellé to "*contact Ankara to inform him of what was going on there and what action could be taken*"<sup>24</sup>.

On 15 April 1921, Pellé telegraphed that Bekir Sami had come to see him and had conveyed to him [Henri] Gouraud's complaints about the non-implementation of the agreement of 11 March. Bekir Sami believed that the agreement would be immediately discussed and ratified. He underlined that the war would by no means end as long as a Greek soldier remained on Turkish soil<sup>25</sup>.

22 M. Briand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, à M. Barrère, Ambassadeur de France à Rome, M. de Saint-Aulaire, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, et M. DeFrance, Haut-Commissaire à Constantinople. T. nos 349-350 ; 380-381 ; 348-349. Paris, 8 février 1921, 21 h. 15. *D.D.F. 1921*, Tome I, 16 janvier-30 juin / Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Geneviève Bibes, Corine DeFrance, Jérôme de Lespinois] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 2004, p.146-147.

23 Archives Geneva, R589-11-11894-11894; *L'Europe nouvelle : revue hebdomadaire des questions extérieures, économiques et littéraires*. 1921-03-26, p. 407-408.

24 M. Briand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, au Général Pellé, Haut-Commissaire Français à Constantinople, à M. de Saint-Aulaire, ambassadeur de France à Londres et M. Barrère, Ambassadeur de France à Rome. t. nos. 786-790 ; 1149-1153 ; 931-935. Paris, 4 avril 1921, 22 h. 20., *D. D. F. 1921*, Tome I, 16 janvier-30 juin / Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Geneviève Bibes, Corine DeFrance, Jérôme de Lespinois] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 2004, p. 425-426.

25 M. Briand, Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, à M. Barthou, Ministre de la Guerre, D. s.n. Paris, 28 avril 1921 *D.D.F. 1921*, Tome I, 16 janvier-30 juin / Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Geneviève Bibes, Corine DeFrance, Jérôme de Lespinois] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 2004, p. 528-529.

Another important development was that even though the Ottoman cabinets, which were completely dependent on Britain, did not protest against the occupation of Cilicia, it was made clear that they would never give up Cilicia, which was, in Mustafa Kemal own words, “a piece of our soul (un morceau de notre chair)”<sup>26</sup>. The former high commissioner asked Kemal for a guarantee of mutual non-aggression in occupied Cilicia and proposed, as an “individual” idea, the evacuation of most of these territories (Çukurova, Maraş, Ayntâb, Urfa) in exchange for economic benefits, which was accepted by Mustafa Kemal<sup>27</sup>. However, this meeting was not followed up.

The Government of the Republic of France and the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye’s Government, who wished to conclude an agreement between the two countries, appointed their plenipotentiaries, and the matters agreed upon in the ongoing negotiations between Monsieur Henry Franklin-Bouillon, the Government of the Republic of France’s Former Minister, and Yusuf Kemal Bey, Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Government of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye, were submitted to the Turkish Grand National Assembly for approval. The negotiations were conducted in sessions held on 4, 12, 13, 16 and 18 October<sup>28</sup>. As a result of the discussions and negotiations, on 18 October, it was decided that “...since the French Government, the French Assembly of Deputies and Proprietors have the right of ratification for a treaty. In other words, the word “ratification” has a meaning in the law of the Constitutional Organization, so your Assembly has the right of acceptance and ratification. Secondly, why is it being negotiated in your Assembly? To submit every issue to your Assembly is to ask for executive power from your Assembly. There is also a law on the authority of the Executive Deputies in the Law on the Principles of Organization. Based on these two laws, I now ask for the authorization to sign, while your right to legislate remains unchanged. (Grant).”<sup>29</sup> Upon this, the Ankara Government signed the Turkish-French Treaty on 20 October 1921. The Government of France also ratified the Ankara Treaty of 20 October 1920<sup>30</sup>.

26 Gontaut-Biron, Comte R. De, *Comment la France s'est Installée en Syrie (1918-1919)*, Paris 1922, p. 338.

27 Sina Akşin, “French-Turkish Relations at the end of 1919,” Batu, Hâmit et Bacqué-Grammont, Jean-Louis, *L'Empire Ottoman, la République de Turquie et la France*, İstanbul-Paris, Les éditions Isis, 1986, p. 441-444.

28 For more detailed information, see: Metintaş, Mustafa Yahya, Ankara Antlaşması’nın Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinde Tartışılması, *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Türk Dünyası Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi Yakın Tarih Dergisi*, 2019, Cilt 2, Sayı, 5, p. 1-26.

29 *T.B.M.M. Gizli Celse Zabıtları*, Devre : 1, Cilt : 2, İçtima : 2, 96’ncı İnikat, 3. Celse, 18 Teşrin-i evvel 1337 (1921) Salı, p. 360-372.

30 Accord signé à Angora le 20 octobre 1921 entre M. Franklin-Bouillon, ancien ministre et Youssef Kemal Bey, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la Grande Assemblée Nationale d’Angora, Angora, 20 octobre 1921, *D.D.F. 1920-1932*. 1920, Tome II, 19 mai-23 septembre / Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Corine Defrance, Traian Sandu] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 1999. p. 430-432 ; T.C. Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Service des Archives diplomatiques, *Centenaire de l'accord d'Angora (1921)* Documents des Archives Diplomatiques Françaises et Turques, Ankara 2022, p. 141.



### Implementation of the Agreement and the Evacuation of Gazi Ayntâb

The announcement of the Treaty caused grave concern in Cilicia, as minorities considered Article 6 to be ambiguous. However, the minority rights recognized in the Misak-ı Milli (National Pact) were confirmed by the Ankara government as well as in the agreements concluded on this issue by the Entente states, their adversaries and allies<sup>31</sup>.

The most important aspect of the agreement was whether the Christian population should be evacuated or not, and if so, what the conditions should be. The prominent view was that it should be “*extended under international supervision to ensure the protection of minorities and the proposal of a Franco-Turkish alliance*”<sup>32</sup>.

In this context, [Henri] Gouraud, in an appeal on 9 November 1921, announcing the imminent transfer of power in Cilicia, advised “all good citizens” not to flee, claiming that the French government was doing what was necessary to protect the rights of minorities, while at the same time stating that leaving would be “nothing short of a disaster and an adventure with no happy ending”. However, an Armenian exodus from Cilicia had already begun. In this regard, [Henri] Gouraud had already warned his superiors that most of the Cilician Armenians would leave with the departing French troops<sup>33</sup>.

Dufieux, who commanded the army of occupation in Cilicia, was completely disillusioned with the French withdrawal. The order given by [Henri] Gouraud on 2 November to prevent Armenians from crossing the new border (without violence, of course) was rejected by Dufieux, who had made it clear months earlier what guarantees were necessary for the Armenians in Cilicia. But these guarantees were not included in the Ankara Agreement. He announced the agreement as ordered and added the meager arguments at his disposal to reassure the population, but applied the principle of giving written permission to Armenians wishing to leave, partly as a safety precaution to prevent the peoples’ fears from spilling over into mass flight or violent unrest<sup>34</sup>.

31 Le Général [Henri] Gouraud, Haut-Commissaire Français à Beyrouth, à M. Briand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, t. nos 1446-1447, urgent. Beyrouth, 3 novembre 1921, 21 h. 45. (Reçu : le 4, 4 h. 50.), *D.D.F. 1921*, Tome II, p. 497-498.

32 M. de Peretti de la Rocca, Directeur des Affaires Politiques et Commerciales, à M. Paul Cambon, Ambassadeur de France à Londres, T. nos 6780-67821. Paris, 26 novembre 1920, 21 h. 15 *D.D.F. 1920*, Tome III, p. 341-342.

33 La Courneuve, Levant 1918–1940, vol. 137, fols. 152–4: [Henri] Gouraud to MAE, October 1, 1921. Already, in January 1921, Robert de Caix had warned [Henri] Gouraud of an “exodus of Armenians” in the event of a French withdrawal: La Courneuve, Levant 1918–1940, vol. 137, fols. 31–3: de Caix to [Henri] Gouraud, January 10, 1921’den aktaran, White, Benjamin Thomas, A Grudging Rescue: France, the Armenians of Cilicia, and the History of Humanitarian Evacuations, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, Volume 10, Number 1, Spring 2019, p. 1-27.

34 White, *A Grudging Rescue*: p. 1-27.

Meanwhile, [Henri] Gouraud continued to tell the ministry that emigration was inevitable. This was the overwhelming impression not only of Dufieux, who resigned on 25 November, but of his officers in the field. That day [Henri] Gouraud wrote to Paris: “All the information I received from Cilicia, and especially that brought by Admiral Grandclement, came back from Adana, confirmed that the Christian population had decided from the beginning to leave the country irrevocably before the Turks returned”<sup>35</sup>. The French government, on the other hand, was of the opinion that “until the evacuation of Cilicia by our troops, it is firmly requested that the local administration, as far as circumstances permit, be completely surrendered to the Turkish authorities”<sup>36</sup>.

In accordance with the Ankara Agreement signed between France and the Ankara Government on 20 October 1921, the French Command Headquarters, in its letter dated 9 December 1921, stated that after the evacuation of Cilicia by French troops, a large number of Christian and Armenian refugees would certainly arrive in the areas under the French mandate and that their demands for shelter and food and drink should be met<sup>37</sup>.

According to the letter of the High Commissioner of the French Republic for Syria and Lebanon, dated 21 November 1921, Colonel Pettelat, Chief of Staff of the Levant Army, would chair the Mixed Commission to be established in order to determine the procedures for the evacuation envisaged in Article IV of the Ankara Agreement and the handover of the areas to be returned to Türkiye. Moreover, Consul General Laporte would head the administrative and legal section and be responsible for relations with the Turkish authorities, which would no longer be under French administration. Additionally, General Dufieux would hand over the command of the 1st Division to General Marty<sup>38</sup>.

According to the program of the Mixed Evacuation Commission, signed by Colonel Şükrü Bey, Chairman of the Turkish Evacuation Commission, and Colonel Pettelat, Chairman of the French Evacuation Commission, for the transfer of the administration of the areas to be evacuated to the representatives of the Ankara Government, the supervision of the Turkish administration in the various cities of the territories returned to Türkiye by the Ankara Agreement by French officers or officials would cease as of 1 December 1921.

35 White, *A Grudging Rescue*: p. 5.

36 M. Leygues, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, Au Général [Henri] Gouraud, Haut-Commissaire Français à Beyrouth 1. T. nos 946-949. Paris, 4 Octobre 1920, 15 h. 20.D. D. F. 1920, Tome III, s. 48-49.

37 Château de Vincennes, Rapports et correspondance relatifs à l'évacuation de la Cilicie. Dossier. 6, p. 98-99.

38 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 6. (I have not come across any documents on this subject in the archives in Türkiye.)

It was decided that they would stay in the city as liaison service officers until 4 January 1922 to complete the solution of the problems related to the transfer of services and the evacuation of the region by French troops by negotiating with the Turkish and French authorities, and that the Turkish flag would be raised in the Government Mansions of Adana, Tarsus, Mersin, Ceyhan, Osmaniye, Dörtyol, Ayas, Kilis, Ayntâb and the houses of Hamid (Kapancızade) Bey and Muhiddin (Akyüz) Pasha as of 1 December<sup>39</sup>.

According to the circular of 21 November, which was set for the French side, Article IV of the Ankara Agreement of 20 October stipulated that the methods of evacuation and takeover of the territories returned to Türkiye were to be determined on the spot by a mixed Franco-Turkish Commission. For the French side, the structure of this commission, according to the general order of 21 November, was to be chaired by Colonel Pettelat, with Consul General [Osmin] Laporte in charge of administrative and civil affairs. Colonel Pettelat also assumed the powers of the High Commissioner for Cilicia delegation when General [Julien] Dufieux left (25 November). As a result, Colonel Pettelat was made responsible for maintaining order in the territory occupied by French troops<sup>40</sup>.

On the Turkish side, the Evacuation Commission consisted of a military body chaired by Colonel Şükrü Bey. In fact, the French Commission and the Turkish Commission did not merge into a single Commission, but continued to function in continuous contact and accord. The extraordinary envoy of Ankara, Hamid (Kapancızade) Bey, on the one hand, and General Muhiddin (Akyüz) Pasha, on the other hand, for military evacuation issues, brought the same spirit of reconciliation to their official and private relations, which facilitated the joint task considerably<sup>41</sup>.

Due to the distance of Ayntâb from Adana, a mixed sub-commission was established, represented on the French side by Captain Peulvey and on the Turkish side by Münir Bey, the Governor of Ayntâb. The goal was to find timely solutions to the many problems that arose due to the evacuation. As the Turks took over the returned territories, the French troops, with all their military equipment, were evacuated by railroad to either Iskenderun or Mersin on the appointed date, 4 January<sup>42</sup>.

The transfer of the administration of Cilicia to the Turkish authorities took place on 1 December, before the departure of the troops<sup>43</sup>. In general, all the

---

39 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 120.

40 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 7-8.

41 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 9.

42 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 10.

43 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 11.

young personnel who had been in service during the French occupation were replaced by Turks. In each of the services performed, the Evacuation Commission tried to leave an absolutely functional setting to the Turks and to ensure that the new authorities had all the necessary means to work effectively<sup>44</sup>.

In Article 2 of the Ankara Agreement (release of prisoners), regarding the issue of the mutual release of previously returned military prisoners, strictly political prisoners and common law prisoners, it was decided that only Muslim common law prisoners would be returned to the Turks. The surrender of Christian prisoners was optional for the French and a list of all prisoners was requested. All Turkish prisoners taken into custody were handed over to the Turkish authorities. Other than that, Hulusi, a Muslim notable who was captured at gunpoint while leading an irregular gang in 1920, was held hostage until an issue regarding a soldier from the Armenian Legion was resolved. Additionally, it was agreed that the French commission would be headed by Colonel Modat of Senegal and the Turkish commission by Colonel Edib Bey<sup>45</sup>.

As soon as the evacuation commission arrived in Adana, the Government of Ankara, either directly or through Mr. Franklin Bouillon, began to make demands for the transfer of military equipment. Moreover, as soon as the question of payment arose, it abandoned one demand after another, only to be able to transfer the Cilician telegraph lines on 4 January in exchange for 60,000 francs<sup>46</sup>.

While the Evacuation Commission carried out the evacuation of Cilicia in accordance with the treaty, in full agreement with the French authorities, who alone would ensure the maintaining of French interests, it was determined which French works would remain after the evacuation on 4 January<sup>47</sup>. In addition, a French and a Muslim orphanage was put into service, grouping Armenian, Syrian, Assyrian-Chaldean and Assyrian orphans who had been in separate orphanages prepared at the time of the evacuation<sup>48</sup>.

No serious incident occurred during this stage. From 1 December 1921 to 6 January 1922, the Evacuation Sub-Commission, operating in the Ayntab-Kilis region, resolved all issues, even the most sensitive ones, within a broad framework, in a spirit of mutual compromise, in the best interests of both sides, and under the best conditions<sup>49</sup>.

---

44 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 12.

45 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 15-16.

46 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 17.

47 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 18.

48 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 19.

49 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 20.

In direct contact with the Turkish representatives and with the Government of Ankara through them, the Evacuation Commission dealt with other urgent problems. In this context, in the framework of determining the number of Christians who emigrated from the areas returned to the Turks between 1 November 1921 and 4 January 1922, it was determined that the number of Christians who left the Ayntâb-Kilis region for Syria was around 4,500<sup>50</sup>.

On the other hand, the Ayntâb-Kilis evacuation sub-committee was composed of civilian members, Consul General Sandfort and Vice Consul Lucas, military members, Captain Peulvey of the Levant Army; Captain Bourgon of the Intelligence Service Liaison Officer of the 2nd Division in Ayntâb; and Lieutenant Curnier, Liaison Officer of the 2nd Division Intelligence Service in Kilis<sup>51</sup>.

The commission focused on the Armenian issue in Kilis and Aintab, the attitude of the nationalist administration, custom rights, postal and telegraph communications, allegations of damage, local factors of French influence, evacuation of troops, nationalist officers and soldiers, investigation of the events, along with the log of the sub-commission, the commissions organised to protect the property of the refugees, the civil and military authorities in Aintab, and the situation of the cemeteries in Aintab<sup>52</sup>.

According to the Commission's reports, during its visit to Kilis on 30 November and its arrival in Aintab on 1 December, the sub-commission found the following situation: The Armenian population of these two cities, initially determined to emigrate, seemed to have generally recovered. Most of the dignitaries had left the country, while the religious leaders and the destitute masses remained. It was clear that the slightest incident or the slightest unfavourable event could cause an almost complete exodus of the Christians still present. The masses always spoke of their fear of seeing themselves looted, ill-treated, deported, massacred. However, when seriously questioned, the few remaining dignitaries admitted that they feared only two things: Compulsory military service and any kind of hardship that they would inevitably have to struggle with. However, the sub-commission noted that the Governor of Aintab and the District Governor of Kilis had committed themselves to this work with genuine goodwill and that they had both made very reassuring statements. The Governor's proclamation was displayed in the town the day after his arrival in Aintab. Indeed, despite the efforts of the nationalist authorities to readjust and assist them, the Armenian emigration, which had been halted for several days,

---

50 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 334.

51 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 26.

52 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 27.

resumed in an unorganised manner, but later organised as a general movement<sup>53</sup>.

In this regard, after allowing Armenian emigrants to enter Egypt and Cyprus, Britain forbade Armenian or Ottoman Greek subjects from Cilicia to board the Khedive Company's boats, regardless of their destination, whilst British properties in Izmir and Istanbul were closed to Armenians. Under these circumstances, France believed it was its primary duty to allow Armenians to enter Syria and to organise the emigration of 35,000 Armenians who wanted to leave the lands returned to the Turks, both in Mersin and Dörtyol. The Armenian refugees were first sorted in Mersin according to their ability to work and the references provided, and were directed to the areas where they could earn the most livelihood without deeply disrupting the economic life of Syria and the political balance of the country. Camps were organised and construction sites were established to temporarily use the Armenian labour force that could not immediately find work in local industries.

The new District Governor of Kilis, who was appointed by the Ankara Government and extremely sensitive concerning the rights of minorities, took over the administrative services of the Kilis district on 11-13 December 1921.<sup>54</sup> On the occasion of the handover,<sup>55</sup> he addressed the representatives of the minority, promising to prevent any violation of the rights granted and expressing his desire to see the misunderstanding between France and Türkiye resolved forever<sup>56</sup>.

Among all the troubles and fears which the Christians would inevitably have to struggle with behalf of the Turkish authorities when the Turkish authorities resumed the free administration of the country, they pointed particularly to any dismissal from office, any investigation of their grievances, confiscation, underhand prosecutions on the grounds of facts or past indifference, illegal arrests, and partial prosecutions due to their Francophilia. Furthermore, the first efforts of the French Consular Representative, Mr. de Sandfort, were immediately directed at the meetings of Christian and Turkish dignitaries held in Kilis and Aintab, in order to give all the reassurances that would resolve the concerns of the Christians. He even made similar appeals when the new Turkish authorities took up office. The Governor of Aintab and the District Governor of Kilis both presented themselves with genuine goodwill and both made very reassuring statements. Moreover, the day after the Governor's arrival in Aintab, a proclamation on various issues was posted in the city. In

---

53 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 28.

54 Château de Vincennes, Bulletin de renseignements n° 285, 11-13 December 1921, p. 131.

55 Bulletin de renseignements, p. 139.

56 Bulletin de renseignements, p. 140.

fact, the emigration of Armenians, which had been halted for a few days, resumed in an unhurried and disorganised manner, despite the overcorrection of the nationalist authorities and their admirable efforts to help. This emigration, however, did not appear to be organised as a general movement, but rather to be of an individual character<sup>57</sup>.

On the other hand, the French Consul warned the Armenians that they remained Ottoman subjects and were neither French subjects, nor under French protection<sup>58</sup>. For those who could afford it, the means of transport were never lacking in December, and throughout the month the services continued to Aleppo in stages, according to the number of cars available. The road was safe, guarded by Turkish gendarmerie posts and patrols. Only a few days, in mid-December, it actually became unusable due to bad weather conditions. In accordance with the instructions, Armenians were provided with Syrian passes on a large scale, averaging first 100, then 200, and by December, up to 300 passes per day in Aintab.<sup>59</sup> It seems that the Turks never prevented the emigration of Armenians. For, especially in Aintab, many Turks became tenants of the Armenian houses that had been left, as the houses of the Turks had become almost uninhabitable after the bombardment.

From the beginning of December, a separate commission was set up in each of the two cities to ensure the protection of the property of the Christian refugees. However, the commission encountered extreme indifference on the part of the Armenian dignitaries invited<sup>60</sup>.

A detailed list of all assets was prepared by the commission. The owners or guardians were identified, and the local police, in co-operation with community representatives, also contributed to the protection of the property of the emigrants. In summary, the Armenians of the Kilis-Aintab region were not subjected to any threats or pressure, and despite the assurances given by both the French representatives and the local authorities, they left the country without haste or panic, using the limited but adequate means of transport that arrived or were available, and the emigration ended on 1 January. At that time, one thousand Armenians remained in Kilis and about five thousand in Aintab. Finally, the remaining Armenians loudly declared that they doubted the future protection that the commission could guarantee them by declaring that they had been handed over to the Turks and that they were deeply resentful of the French.<sup>61</sup> Moreover, a person who wrote to the newspaper under the

---

57 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 29-30.

58 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 29-30.

59 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 30.

60 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 31.

61 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 32.



pseudonym Pro-French asked the French authorities: “Why did you bring us here if you were going to leave us? After you leave, we will not forget that our sacred cemeteries were trampled by Mustafa Kemal”. An editorial by Arevelyan Mamul titled “*France Sells Out the Armenians of Cilicia to Mustafa Kemal*” was considered to be the most powerful expression of the Armenian community’s anger towards the French authorities:<sup>62</sup> “*Long live France! Long live France, which played the role of a perfect Judas for the Armenians of Cilicia. The names of [Aristide] Briand, the foolish Franklin-Bouillon and his friends will be written in red ink in history as Armenian executioners. Perhaps they will join the policy of Talat, Enver and Nazım and have the Armenians of Cilicia massacred too, so that the Armenian issue will be clarified and covered up forever*”<sup>63</sup>.

However, for the security of the Armenian people, the National Delegation, headed by Boghos Nubar, sent to the Paris Conference convened on 18 January 1919, with the authority to discuss and decide on behalf of the Armenian people, with the intention of facilitating the work of both sides and reconciling the interests of France and Armenia on the Cilician question, proposed in a friendly spirit that the following conditions be taken into consideration: “The Armenian presence in Cilicia shall be recognised by France and the French mandate in Cilicia shall be recognised by the Armenian delegation, the Armenian flag will fly fraternally with the French flag on all public, military and civil building,”.<sup>64</sup> However, after the end of the Cilician conflict, France did not fulfil any of these promises.

The inauguration of the new nationalist officials in Aintab on 4 December and in Kilis on 7 December allowed the Sub-Commission of Aintab to see them in action and to form an opinion regarding their ideas and even their projects. Meetings, conversations and courtesy visits between Turks and Armenians, which were always valuable, were frequent, and the Turks did not reject them in any way, but were generally friendly, courteous and cordial. When the members of the Sub-Commission considered it worthwhile, they prepared notes, sometimes signed by one or other member of the Sub-Commission, sometimes by two members when the question was relevant, and handed them

62 Arevelyan Mamul, *Ֆրանսո-Քէմալական Հռչակաւոր Համաձայնութիւնը (Franko-Kemalagan Hrchagavor Hamatsaynutiwné)* [The Renowned Franco-Nationalist Agreement], 30 December 1921, no. 2746, cited by, Şekeryan, Ari, *The Armenians and the Fall of the Ottoman Empire After Genocide, 1918–1923*, Cambridge University Press 2023, p. 155.

63 Arevelyan Mamul, *Ֆրանսա Կը Օսմանէ Կիլիկիոյ Հայութիւնը Մուսթաֆա Քէմալի (Fransa Gê Dzakhe Giligioy Hayutiwné)* [France Sells the Armenians of Cilicia to Mustafa Kemal], 11 November 1921, No. 2703’den aktaran, Şekeryan, Ari, *The Armenians and the Fall of the Ottoman Empire After Genocide, 1918–1923*, Cambridge University Press 2023, p. 156.

64 Augillon [Մթիկ] 30.11.1920, Organization of Armenian volunteers under the French flag. Augillon: Cattle prod. The Greek word ‘augillon’ means a stick with a pointed iron at the end to speed up an animal’s gait.

to Governor, and the issue was resolved perfectly, as always<sup>65</sup>. What was promised was fulfilled in full, and the French Consul Sandfort no longer recognised in these nationalists, who kept their promises so scrupulously, from the previous Turks that he had dealt with before the war<sup>66</sup>.

The newly appointed Governor Münir Bey arrived in Aintab on the evening of 2 December with great humility, in an unpompous way, and settled in a very modest room in the only hotel left, without a single demonstration on the occasion of his arrival. The government officials likewise went about their work unpretentiously, with pride in their hearts.<sup>67</sup> The officers of the Joint Evacuation Commission for Aintab left the city on 9 January<sup>68</sup>.

Post, telegraph and communications, the Turkish authorities of the two cities are in no hurry to see how the Turkish post office is functioning. It seemed that no one felt the need for this. Until 9 January, no regular postal service was reopened between Aintab and Marash or Urfa, as in Kilis and Aleppo<sup>69</sup>.

Until the arrival of the nationalist officials, none of the communities dared to claim compensation for the damage caused in and around Aintab during the siege. According to France, compensation could be the sole responsibility of Türkiye or could be settled in a subsequent negotiation between the two countries<sup>70</sup>.

The evacuation of equipment and supplies from Aintab and Kilis was carried out without any incident during late November and December, with powerful horse convoys travelling to Katma, and the troops occupying Aintab left the city without incident on 25 December. All positions established on the hills overlooking Aintab to the south, east and north were destroyed by French troops the day before their departure. The troops were accommodated in the American College, which was still being converted into barracks, the offices of the General Staff were relocated to known and American-owned houses in the area, while the officials remained in the city, especially in the Armenian quarter<sup>71</sup>.

Between 4 December and 17 December, when the nationalist representatives took up office, there were no incidents either in Aintab or in Kilis. 8 days before

---

65 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 33.

66 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 34.

67 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 35.

68 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 36.

69 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 41.

70 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 43-44.

71 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 50.

the evacuation of the troops, a series of incidents began in Aintab: On 17 December, a former Turkish veterinarian was attacked in the evening by two Algerian skirmishers who took his money; the assailants were never identified. The following day, on Sunday 18 December, French troops, whose actions up to that time had not given rise to any investigation, spread out all over the city with a bad prejudice, starting a brawl in the Verdun Cafeteria in the Armenian quarter and removing the veils of women in the Turkish quarter.<sup>72</sup> On the night of the same day, a service patrol was attacked by two men with pistols, both Armenians. Moreover, bottles were thrown several times at a group of French officers by Armenians on a balcony, even though they identified themselves. The Armenians were arrested by the Turkish police.

On 19 December the commander of the Turkish gendarmerie received a complaint about the theft by French soldiers from a suitcase merchant in a Turkish town. The soldiers were punished by the commander. On 20 December, at around 8.00 p.m., an armed clash broke out between a group of five Turkish villagers and the Spahi farm outpost outside the town; one of the Turks, shot in the stomach, died in hospital the following morning. The villagers claimed that the shooting happened due to a mistake and that the shepherds had started shooting at a wolf they had chased to the outpost. The French military authority decided this case in favour of the Turkish side. On 22 December, at the beginning of the night, the sentry of the Algerian skirmishers post was shot, the assailants were captured by the Turkish gendarmerie and it was established that the murder had been committed by three Armenians<sup>73</sup>.

Between 30 December and 3 January, the desecration of French military cemeteries was brought to the public's attention and the decision to repair them was implemented<sup>74</sup>. The perpetrators of the acts of vandalism were arrested and the requested immaterial compensation was paid in an official ceremony attended by civil-military officials, a Catholic priest, an imam and a team of 30 armed Turkish soldiers<sup>75</sup>. It was also found that three Muslim graves had been, and continued to be, dug up<sup>76</sup>.

A meeting of the Sub-Commission for the Evacuation of Aintab-Kilis<sup>77</sup> (composed of the French Consul, Sandfort, Captain Peulvey of the Army of the Levant, Captain Bourgon of the Intelligence Service, and Lieutenant Curnier of the Kilis Intelligence Service)<sup>78</sup> was held on 4 December 1921. The

---

72 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 55.

73 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 56.

74 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 57.

75 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 58.

76 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 60.

77 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 62.

78 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 61.

administration of the Aintab Sanjak would be handed over to Münir Bey at the Aintab Mansion the following morning, and the appointment of the new governor of Kilis would be made as soon as possible after the Aintab authorities had taken control of the relevant departments, it was agreed in the presence of the Evacuation Commission, the Joint Sub-Commission, dignitaries and representatives of all communities that the gendarmerie of the sanjak and the police of the new government would take up their duties in Kilis from 4 December, but only on the day of the transfer of powers to the new Governor of Kilis, and that the police stations in the interior of the city would be taken over by the police officers and gendarmes of the new government<sup>79</sup>. The speech of the French Consul, Mr de Sandfort, and the positive attitude of the Governor created a good impression<sup>80</sup>. The officials arrived and took their places, the transfer of services was carried out without demonstrations, and the Governor made a reassuring statement reminding everyone in the city that the new Government was determined to enforce order<sup>81</sup>.

At the request of Captain Bourgon, representative of the Evacuation Sub-Commission regarding the organization of the Commission for the Property of Immigrants in Aintab, at 10 a.m. on 7 December 1921, Yeghiazar Benlian, delegate of the Armenian Orthodox Community, Dr. Khalfayan, delegate of the Armenian Protestant Community, Naoum Hougaz, delegate of the Armenian Catholic Community, Hakkı Bey, Director of Police, appointed as a member of the commission, and convened under the chairmanship of the mayor, Eşref Bey, decided to establish the powers of the chairman and members of the commission, to choose a place in the city for the meetings of the commission, to determine the method of work, and to entrust each of the delegates of the Armenian communities with the creation of a list of the community's refugees, along with the following: Buildings, furniture, property entrusted to third parties (parents who stayed in Aintab and administrators), property entrusted under the custody of the community, a copy of the list of abandoned property, its translation and the minutes<sup>82</sup>.

The representatives of the Armenian community, explaining that they had difficulty in making a list of the property of the refugees of their community, asked that this task be entrusted to the local authorities of the neighborhood, and the commission decided that the list of properties would be made by the local authorities in cooperation with the Armenian delegates (19 December 1921)<sup>83</sup>.

---

79 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 64.

80 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 64.

81 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 64.

82 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 69-70.

83 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 73

The delegates of the Armenian communities conducted a census of the property of 237 refugees on 28 December 1921, and Dr. Khalfayan presented a list based on the name of the emigrant, district, religious denomination, furniture or buildings, name of the tenant, representative of the emigrant, new address of the emigrant, and at the meeting of 31 December 1921, a list of 300 buildings belonging to the emigrants<sup>84</sup>.

According to the report of the meeting of the Commission for the Protection of the Properties of the Refugees of Kilis on 28 December 1921, by the District Governor of Kilis on 17/12/1921, and by the Kilis officer of the Evacuation Commission of Aintab on 8/12/1921, in the context of the fulfillment of the solution proposals made at their meetings, in the presence of the Gendarme Commander, Rasim Bey, the Christian leader representing the Gregorian communities, Agob Basmacian, the elected representative of the Protestant minority, under the chairmanship of Costan Miguirditch (who had gone to Aleppo), Serop Seropian, representing the Catholic and Orthodox minorities, Lieutenant Curnier, appointed by the Sub-Commission of Aintab, and Mayor Tirazzade Ahmed Remzi, it was decided to make an inventory of the properties of the refugees and to protect the rights and interests of the landowners among them, and upon the proposal of the Chairman of the Commission, a sub-commission consisting of two Muslim and two Christian experts would be established to carry out the inventory<sup>85</sup>.

During and after the evacuation, on several occasions between December 25 and 31, French military cemeteries were vandalized, some graves were searched, stelae and crosses were broken and the name 'France' was carved, and also some Muslim graves were vandalized and searched. The Evacuation Commission was informed of the situation and requested that the graves be restored to their original condition and that the duty of punitive damages be fulfilled in respect of the graves. The Turkish authorities immediately carried out the necessary investigation, arrested the perpetrators, carried out the necessary repairs in accordance with the original and the moral reparation was fulfilled by holding an official ceremony at the cemeteries<sup>86</sup>.

Meanwhile, when Christians expressed their concern about threats from some extremists who had recently returned to Gazi Aintab, Mustafa Kemal sent a letter to the residents of Ghazi Aintab in response to a congratulatory message, reminding them that extremists should be prevented from committing acts or

---

84 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 77-78.

85 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 79.

86 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 80-119.

87 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 65.

uttering words that might alarm Christians and suggesting contact with the Governor<sup>87</sup>.

In addition, the troops of the Algerian Fighter Regiment, which had returned to the city from the outposts due to bad weather conditions were placed in the Armenian quarter (because the houses in the Armenian quarter remained intact), and the Governor informed the authorities that he would imprison the local authorities if they refused to return the produce of their harvest to the Christians<sup>88</sup>.

On 25 December, the French troops moved out by 7 a.m. The Turkish troops, consisting of 175 cavalry, 4 75-gun cannons and between 400 and 500 men, entered the city from the Maraş road at 2 p.m. without any incident, speeches were made, a reception ceremony was held, and Captain Peulvey met with Colonel Talat Bey<sup>89</sup>.

Barthe de Sandfort, the French consul in charge of the mission in Adana, wrote to Foreign Minister Briand, in a letter dated 30 December 1921, addressed to Ayntab and titled "Statements of an officer of the nationalist army". He stated the following in his letter: *"The day after the Turkish troops entered Aintab, Captain Peulvey, Captain Bourgon and I were invited to dinner at Colonel Talat Bey's house. Surrounded by his officers and the Governor General, the colonel gave the floor during the evening to his deputy commander Nuri Bey, one of the most typical figures of the nationalist general staff. Nuri Bey, a very active participant in the battle of Sakarya, with an extremely aggressive and irritable disposition, had just returned from the Anatolian front: 'As long as there is a Turk left alive, Izmir will not belong to the Greeks,' he says. ... 'The strong support they found in London is beginning to disappoint them and the British have offered to withdraw from the war game if we give them freedom in Mesopotamia. But we do not want to negotiate and we will not give in on the Mesopotamian issue as we did on the Smyrna and Thrace issue'. On many occasions, Commander Nuri Bey expressed the Turks' deep gratitude to France, which was the first to extend its hand to them, and proved to the whole world the rightness of their cause"*<sup>90</sup>.

According to French military documents, the border was very permeable and while some Armenians took refuge in Aleppo, where they gladly accepted the

88 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 66.

89 Château de Vincennes, Rapports, p. 66.

90 M. Barthe de Sandfort, consulchargé de mission à Adana, à M. Briand, Ministre des Affaires Étrangères, D. n° 5. Aïntab, 30 décembre 1921. (Reçu : 27 janvier 1922.), a. s. déclarations d'un officier de l'armée nationaliste, D.D.F., 1921, Tome II, 1er juillet-31 décembre / Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [rédigé par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Geneviève Bibes, Corine Defrance, Jérôme de Lepsinois] ; [sous la direction de Jacques Bariéty]. 2005, p. 808.



“Near East Relief”, others returned to Aintab and Kilis and settled in their old places there. Meanwhile, as they were about to leave Aintab, it was reported that the French military cemeteries in and around the city had been ransacked, crosses and tombstones broken and several graves opened, and the Evacuation Sub-Commission and the authorities were informed. The guilty Muslim fanatics were promptly arrested, material repairs were made, and finally, on 5 January, a formal ceremony was held in the main French cemetery in a friendly tribute to the dead. In the presence of French delegates, Turkish civilian and military officials, a group of 30 Turkish soldiers led by an officer, a priest and an imam, prayers were offered and the ceremony took place<sup>91</sup>.

According to Paillarès, no propaganda was used to encourage the emigration of the Cilicians, and Christians and some Muslims were instinctively<sup>92</sup> motivated to emigrate by this unique population,<sup>93</sup> which found itself abandoned to its tragic fate and sacrificed to the relentless Moloch<sup>94</sup>.

## Conclusion

It was stated that there were no serious disagreements between the representatives of France and the Ankara government on the implementation of the treaty, on the contrary, great goodwill and efforts were made to resolve the issues amicably, and that the Christian factor had to leave a city which was an important ‘client community’ for the French and which they were believed to have occupied to defend them<sup>95</sup>. Evacuations were carried out everywhere in an orderly and calm manner<sup>96</sup>. Decisions concerning minorities were resolved strictly within the framework of decisions taken in ‘mixed commissions’ in which representatives of each community participated. However, the Christians who did not want to migrate remained in their places, especially the Armenians, most of whom stayed in their places of their own accord, and the Armenians who had initially migrated were provided with every opportunity to return and were employed in Ghazi Aintab.

In the declaration issued to the ‘Christians of Cilicia’ following the Treaty of Ankara, it was emphasized that the allegations made against the treaty were completely unfounded, that all the general guarantees provided to minorities

---

91 Bulletin périodique n° 39, 5 décembre 1921-5 janvier 1922, p. 7.

92 Paillarès, Michel, *Le Kémalisme devant les Alliés, éditions du Bosphore*, Constantinople-Paris, 1922, p. 386.

93 Paillarès, M., 1922, p. 386.

94 Paillarès, M., 1922, p. 386.

95 Château de Vincennes, Bulletins et rapports périodiques provenant du haut commissariat sur la situation en Syrie et en Cilicie, Dossier, 001, p. 3.

96 Bulletins et rapports Dossier, 001, p. 05.



in European countries were essential and that both Governments promised to fulfill their agreed guarantees, that a Joint Franco-Turkish Commission representing all communities had been appointed to protect abandoned properties, that any acts of looting would be punished mercilessly, that the return of the refugees to their homes was guaranteed to everyone in the context of freedom and justice<sup>97</sup>.

According to Aurore Bruna,<sup>98</sup> in the defense of Aintab, which was a Pyrrhic victory for them, France, facing reality and focusing on its domestic politics, only wished to rebuild itself and find peace, legitimized a revolutionary government and officially recognized the new state with the Treaty of Ankara. The scope of the Treaty of Ankara is therefore remarkable because modern-day Türkiye is based on this Kemalist Türkiye. The Ankara Treaty is therefore an extremely important diplomatic achievement<sup>99</sup>.

By signing the Treaty of Ankara, Mustafa Kemal rendered the Tripartite Agreement<sup>100</sup> between Britain, France and Italy, which was based on a campaign to divide and fragment Anatolia, inoperative.

In the context of the disputes between Britain and France, Britain accused France of violating the Tripartite Agreement. However, on 14 July 1921, France gave precise assurances to the British Government, emphasizing that France had no choice but either to retain its troops and continue the war in Cilicia or to negotiate with the de facto power in command of the Turkish troops in this region, and after a clear, strong and continuous expression of the will of the French nation in favor of evacuation, the French Government declared that it was obliged to pursue the conclusion of a local arrangement. The present document was sent to the British Government on 4 April 1921, and it was emphasized, as had already been verbally communicated to Lord Hardinge, that the Treaty of Ankara was a local arrangement of local scope, concluded only by an authority capable of fulfilling and enforcing its commitments, and by a force displaying patriotism and loyalty<sup>101</sup>. Another issue was that the Treaty also ceded a strip of territory conquered by British troops in violation of the Allies' joint commitments<sup>102</sup>.

---

97 Adana, 1e Novembre 1921 signe : Mouhiddine Pacha, Hamid Bey, Franklin-Bouillon, Proclamation p. 205-206.

98 See: Gauin, Maxime, "Review Essay: Aurore Bruna's Anti-History of the Ankara Agreement," *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 43 (2021): 141-175.

99 Bruna, Aurore, La France, les Français face à la Turquie, *IRICE* | Bulletin de l'Institut Pierre Renouvin, 2008/1 N° 27, p. 27-41.

100 Tripartite Agreement between the British Empire, France and Italy respecting Anatolia [Cmd. 963.] signed at Sèvres August 10, 1920, printed and published by His Majesty's Stationery Office, London 1920.

101 *D.D.F. 1921*, Tome II, 1er juillet-31 décembre, p. 574-593.

102 Château de Vincennes, Rapport de l'attaché militaire, dossier no 1, série 1920-1940, carton 7 N 3212.

The disputes, especially between Britain and France, significantly undermined the Tripartite Treaty and solidified the foundations of the nascent Turkish Republic.

Mustafa Kemal expressed his views on the Treaty of Ankara in a speech to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye on 5 December 1921 as follows:

*“Within the framework of the newly concluded treaty with France, our officials have returned to Adana, which has been an integral part of our country for centuries but has been under military occupation since the end of the Great War. I praise the Almighty God for the return of the province of Adana and other parts of our lands to the motherland. On behalf of the Grand National Assembly, I am happy to greet the people of this part of the country in their homeland. (...) The people of Adana and the Aintab region, who, having been subjected to the calamities and sorrows of the Great War, have now found tranquillity, will naturally devote themselves to the development and prosperity of the country, (...) The various minorities in the territory of Türkiye, who have lived for centuries with the fraternity and affection of a native son, and who have been bound together by the strongest of social bonds, the interest of participation, and who have been attached to this country by many precious memories, (...) also have their duties to perform. In order to remind you of these duties in a few words, I am addressing the entire population, without distinction of sex or religious denomination: The Government of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye is a democratic government, the nation and the Government are in close cooperation in all matters of national concern. It is futile to dwell on the need for tranquillity felt by our country, it must be refuted by actions. In the face of the malign voices raised by our enemies, it is necessary to prove to our friends as well as to our enemies that we are the members of a free and united nation. Therefore, it is your duty to help the government and always put the interests of the country above personal interests. I am convinced that the people, who have so far shown their ability to maintain their dignity and tranquility in the face of many extraordinary and important events, will appreciate this necessity this time as well, and will establish mutual affection in their minds, regardless of religion and ethnicity, and will not take any action that is contrary to reason and logic.”<sup>103</sup>*

By the time the imperialist states realized that they were faced with a genius, it was already too late.

---

103 Château de Vincennes, Bulletin de renseignements, Proclamation, p. 143-144-145. See : *Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri*, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara 2006, Belge No : 437, p. 442.

## Bibliography

### Archives.

General Staff Military History and Strategic Study Directorate (ATASE).

Château de Vincennes.

India Office Records (I.O.R) and Private Papers.

Ministre des Affaires Étrangères.

### Books and Articles.

Abadie, [Jean-Joseph] M[aurice], *Les Quatre Sièges d'Aïntab*, Paris: Charles-Lavauzelle & Cie, 1922.

Adil, Selahaddin, *Hayat Mücadeleleri*, İstanbul 1962.

Akşin, Sina “French-Turkish Relations at the end of 1919,” Batu, Hâmit et Bacqué-Grammont, Jean-Louis, *L'Empire Ottoman, la République de Turquie et la France*, İstanbul-Paris, Les éditions Isis, 1986, p. 441-444.

Akşin, Sina, *İstanbul Hükûmetleri ve Millî Mücadele*, İstanbul 1983.

Arevelyan Mamul, Ֆրանսա Կը Ծախէ Կիլիկիոյ Հայութիւնը Մուսթաֆա Քէմալի (Fransa Gê Dzakhe Giligioy Hayutiwneʻ) [France Sells the Armenians of Cilicia to Mustafa Kemal], 11 November 1921, No. 2703.

Arevelyan Mamul, Ֆրանկո-Քէմալական Հռչակաւոր Համաձայնութիւնը (Franko-Kemalagan Hrchagavor Hamatsaynutiwneʻ) [The Renowned Franco-Nationalist Agreement], 30 December 1921, no. 2746.

Atatürk'ün Tamim, Telgraf ve Beyannameleri, Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi, Ankara 2006.

Bruna, Aurore, La France, les Français face à la Turquie, *Bulletin de l'Institut Pierre Renouvin* 2008/1 N° 27.

*Documents Diplomatiques Français 1921*, Tome I, 16 janvier-30 juin / Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstovf,

Geneviève Bibes, Corine Defrance, Jérôme de Lespinois] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 2004.

*Documents Diplomatiques Français 1920-1932*. 1920, Tome II, 19 mai-23 septembre / Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Corine Defrance, Traian Sandu] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 1999.

*Documents Diplomatiques Français 1920*, Tome III, 24 septembre-15 janvier 1921 / Ministère des affaires étrangères, Commission de publication des documents diplomatiques français ; [réd. par Anne Hogenhuis-Seliverstoff, Corine Défrance, Traian Sandu] ; [sous la dir. de Jacques Bariéty]. 2002.

Flandin, M. Étienne (1853-1922), *Rapport sur la Syrie et la Palestine*, Paris 1915, s. 3-8.

Gauin, Maxime, “Review Essay: Aurore Bruna’s Anti-History of the Ankara Agreement,” *Review of Armenian Studies*, Issue 43 (2021): 141-175.

Gazi Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk*, Ankara 1927.

Gontaut-Biron, Comte R. De, *Comment la France s’est Installée en Syrie (1918-1919)*, Paris 1922.

Great Britain, *Parliamentary Papers*.

*Harb Tarihi Vesikaları*, Yıl 5, Mart-1956, Sayı: 15.

Kurkjian, Vahan M., *The Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia*, New York, 1919.

*L’Illustration*, Samedi 19 Mars 1921.

Lohanizâde Mustafa Nureddin, *Hubb-ı İstiklâlin Abidesi Gaziyantâb Müdafaası*, Bâb-ı âli Cağaloğlu Yokuşu.

Metintaş, Mustafa Yahya, Ankara Antlaşması’nın Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisinde Tartışılması, *Eskişehir Osmangazi Üniversitesi Türk Dünyası Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi Yakın Tarih Dergisi*, 2019, Cilt 2, Sayı, 5.

Paillarès, Michel, *Le Kémalisme devant les Alliés, éditions du Bosphore*, Constantinople-Paris, 1922.

Pekdoğan, Celal. “Levant, Kilikya, Kemalistler Bağlamında Maraş Savunması.” *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Sayı 69, 2021.

Sonyel, R. Salâhi “İngiltere Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belgelerinin Işığında 1919 İngiliz- Osmanlı Gizli Antlaşması”, *Belleten*, C. xxxiv, No : 135, Ankara Temmuz 1970.

Şekeryan, Ari, *The Armenians and the Fall of the Ottoman Empire After Genocide, 1918–1923*, Cambridge University Press 2023.

Şekeryan, Ari, *The Armenians and the Fall of the Ottoman Empire After Genocide, 1918–1923*, Cambridge University Press 2023.

Şimşir, Bilal N., *İngiliz Belgelerinde Atatürk (1919-1938)*, Cilt II Nisan - Aralık 1920), *British Documents on Atatürk (1919-1938)* Volume II April - December 1920, Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara 1975.

T.C. Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Service des Archives diplomatiques, *Centenaire de l'accord d'Angora (1921)*, Documents des Archives Diplomatiques Françaises et Turques, Ankara 2022.

White, Benjamin Thomas, A Grudging Rescue: France, the Armenians of Cilicia, and the History of Humanitarian Evacuations, *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development*, Volume 10, Number 1, Spring 2019.

Yavuz, Ünsal, “Fransız Dışişleri Bakanlığı Belgelerinde 12 Eylül 1919 Tarihli Osmanlı-İngiliz Gizli Antlaşması”, *Askerî Tarih Bülteni*, Yıl : 17, Ağustos 1992, Sayı : 33.

### **Newspapers.**

*Augillon* [Մթինգ] 30.11.1920.

*Al-Takaddom*, 13 Février 1921.

*L'Europe nouvelle: revue hebdomadaire des questions extérieures, économiques et littéraires.* 1921.03.26.



Selenay Erva YALÇIN\*

**A VERSE DICTIONARY IN TURKISH ARMENIAN:  
A SHORT DICTIONARY BOOKLET**

*(TÜRKÇE ERMENİCE BİR MANZUM SÖZLÜK:  
KISA BİR SÖZLÜK KİTAPÇIĞI)*

**Title:** Türkçe Ermenice Bir Manzum Sözlük: Kısa Bir Sözlük Kitapçığı

**Authors:** Ercan Cihan ULUPINAR - Fatma Jale Gül ÇORUK

**Publisher:** Çizgi Kitabevi

**ISBN:** 978-625-396-299-9

**Language:** Turkish

**Number of pages:** 406

The authors of this book are Lecturer Dr. Ercan Cihan ULUPINAR and Research Assistant Dr. F. Jale Gül ÇORUK working at Ankara University Faculty of Language, History and Geography, Department of Caucasian Literature and Cultures, Department of Armenian Language and Culture.

\* ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-2165-5580>  
Scholar in Residence, AVİM, s.erva.yalcin@avim.org.tr



This will be a review of the authors' booklet titled "Türkçe Ermenice Bir Manzum Sözlük: Kısa Bir Sözlük Kitapçığı" (A Verse Dictionary In Turkish Armenian: A Short Dictionary Booklet) published on June 2024. The booklet consists of two main sections (introduction and textual analysis), as well as an index and appendices. The linguistic analysis of the verse dictionary "Kısa Bir Sözlük Kitapçığı" (A Short Dictionary Booklet) written by Boğos Torosyan of Divriği is the first comprehensive work on Turkish-Armenian verse dictionaries. As stated in the introduction, the booklet was written to be used as a source for those working in the fields of Armenology and Turkology, as well as general and historical linguistics, lexicology and etymology.

The introduction, which is one of the main chapters of the book, consists of five sub-sections:

- Divriğili Boğos Torosyan and "A Short Dictionary Booklet",
- An Evaluation of "A Short Dictionary Booklet",
- Syllabic Meter Used in the Text and Enclisis Techniques,
- Analyzing Frequently Used Armenian Words in the Text,
- Key to Reading

The fourth sub-section "Analyzing Frequently Used Armenian Words in the Text" contains six subheadings:

1. Conjunctives, Auxiliary Verbs and Verbs
2. Conjunctions
3. Nouns
4. Adverbs
5. Verbs
6. Abbreviations Used in the Text

In the introduction, various definitions and explanations were made regarding the dictionaries. Explanations about verse dictionaries, which constitute the subject of the study, were given and the periods of dictionary writing in Armenian written culture were mentioned. The linguistic analysis

of “A Short Dictionary Booklet” included the place of publication, the estimated date of publication of the manuscript, and available information about the life and works of the author, Boghos Torosian of Divrigi. The cover and the first page of the booklet were added as images in the review. The introductory sentence on the booklet’s first page was included in the review in Armenian and Turkish, thus conveying the author's purpose in producing the work to the reader. In addition, the epilogue part of the work was translated into Turkish and the reader is informed about this part as well.

In the following section, the number of page verses, the Armenian letters included and not included in the dictionary, and the punctuation marks used are indicated. Additionally, the list of Turkish words whose Armenian meanings were included in the review was meticulously tabulated and presented to the reader.

The syllabic meter and enclisis techniques used in the text were explained separately and with examples. The analysis of frequently used words in the text was also elaborated in detail under headings. Much effort was made to present the analysis with examples. The chapters contain words written in Armenian letters, transliterated versions and Turkish meanings of the words individually. The abbreviations used in the text were analyzed and explained in detail. The key for reading was presented in the form of a table and the flow of textual analysis is shown with a graph. All these headings are very useful in guiding the reader.

The second main part of the booklet, which consists of textual analysis, was also prepared meticulously. The verse text was analyzed piece by piece for easy understanding and analysis. It was first presented in Armenian letters, while the transliterated version of the original text was presented in italics within the verse text. Afterwards, the linguistic analysis of both Turkish and Armenian word meanings were presented to the reader together with their definitions.

The appendix contains four sample pages from the original text, enriching the review in this way.

The work draws attention with its feature of being the most comprehensive study in the field. The original text, translation and analysis were prepared in a very clear and understandable way. Moreover, a key for reading has been provided for easier utilization to the reader. These render the work very practical. The authors have also analyzed the frequently used words in the text in a separate sub-section and presented them to the reader in the

simplest form. Taken as a whole, the booklet is a resource that can be of maximum efficacy to those working in the fields of Armenology, Turkology, linguistics, lexicology and etymology. It is also significant in terms of providing insight for future studies in the field of Turkish-Armenian lexicography.

### **Bibliography**

Ercan Cihan Ulupınar, Fatma Jale Gül Çoruk, *Türkçe-Ermenice Bir Manzum Sözlük: Kısa Bir Sözlük Kitapçığı*, Konya, Çizgi Kitabevi, 2024.

# CALL FOR PAPERS AND STYLE SHEET: *REVIEW OF ARMENIAN STUDIES*

The *Review of Armenian Studies* is a biannual academic journal that was established in 2002 with the aim of publishing academic papers to stimulate inter-disciplinary debate between academics and practitioners on topics relating to Armenian Studies.

The *Review of Armenian Studies* invites paper submissions on any subject related to the journal's scope of research, which include:

- The Armenian revolts in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century era of the Ottoman Empire
- Historical, political, and social dimensions of the 1915 events
- Various aspects of the dispute over the 1915 events
- Politics in the Armenian world (in Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora)
- Culture and society in the Armenian world (in Armenia and in the Armenian Diaspora)
- Bilateral relations of Armenia with other countries
- Regional and international politics of Armenia

*Review of Armenian Studies* is indexed by EBSCO and TÜBİTAK/ULAKBİM.

## Manuscript Submission

Articles submitted for publication are subject to peer review. The journal's language is English. *Review of Armenian Studies* accepts academic research that has not been previously submitted to another journal for publication. Submissions must be written in accordance with the standards put forward by the journal, and with a clear and concise language. The journal uses the latest edition of Chicago Manual of Style (full note) as its citation style. Please refer to Chicago Manual of Style official website for further details regarding proper citation methods ([www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org)). *Review of Armenian Studies* recommends the use of automated citation platforms such as "Zotero" or "Citation Machine" to make citation faster and easier for the authors.

Please submit manuscripts via e-mail to Managing Editor Dr. Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun via [tetulun@avim.org.tr](mailto:tetulun@avim.org.tr).

*Review of Armenian Studies* welcomes the submission of manuscripts as articles and book reviews.

Articles should range from 6,000 to 18,000 words and should be approximately 10-30 single-spaced pages in length (including footnotes and bibliography). Articles must be word processed using Microsoft Word, 12 point font, Times New Roman, and should be single-spaced throughout allowing good (1-1/2 inch) margins. Pages should be numbered sequentially. There should be a clear hierarchy of headings and subheadings. Quotations with more than 40 words should be indented from the left margin.

The title page of the article should include the following information:

- Article title
- Names and affiliations of all contributing authors
- Full address for correspondence, including telephone and email address
- Abstract: please provide a short summary of up to 300 words.
- Keywords: please provide 5 key words, suitable for indexing. Ideally, these words will not have appeared in the title.

Book reviews should range from 1,200 to 2,400 words and should be approximately 2-4 single-spaced pages in length (including footnotes), and should be on recently published books on related subjects. Book reviews must be word processed using Microsoft Word, 12 point font, Times New Roman, and should be single-spaced throughout allowing good (1-1/2 inch) margins. Pages should be numbered sequentially. Page numbers regarding the book under review should be given in parentheses within the text, other citations should be given in the footnote section.

Book reviews should have a title. The details of the book under review should be listed with the following details:

- First and last name(s) of the author(s) or editor(s) of the book under review.
- Title of book
- Year of publication
- Place of publication
- Publisher
- Number of pages
- Language of the book
- Price (please indicate paperback or hard cover) if available.

We are now welcoming contributions for the 51th issue of this journal.

Complete submissions are due 15 April 2025

The editorial office will make every effort to deal with submissions to the journal as quickly as possible. All papers will be acknowledged on receipt by email.



# ORDER FORM

Dear Readers,

The entire archive of our periodical publications is available as open access on the Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) website and the DergiPark system.

Please visit the [www.avim.org.tr](http://www.avim.org.tr) address to find our journal archive and all of our other publications that have been made available as open access.

On the other hand, information on subscription and other book fees is available below for readers wishing to acquire our publications as printed copies.

Name : ..... Address : .....  
Last Name : .....  
Telephone : .....  
E-mail : .....

## Subscriptions

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ermeni Araştırmaları Journal - 6 Months             | Annual 400 TRY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Review of Armenian Studies Journal - 6 Months       | Annual 400 TRY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Uluslararası Suçlar ve Tarih Journal - Per Year     | Annual 260 TRY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avrasya Dünyası / Eurasian World Journal - 6 Months | Annual 440 TRY |

## Books

- |  |         |
|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ermeni Sorunu Temel Bilgi ve Belgeler Ömer Engin LÜTEM / (Extended version and 2nd edition)   | 15 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Armenian Diaspora - Diaspora, State and the Imagination of the Republic of Armenia / Turgut Kerem TUNCEL                                    | 35 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balkan Savaşlarında Rumeli Türkleri Kırımlar - Kıyımlar - Göçler (1821-1913) / Bilâl N. ŞİMŞİR  | 25 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turkish-Russian Academics / A Historical Study on the Caucasus  | 20 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gürcistan'daki Müslüman Topluluklar / Azınlık Hakları, Kimlik, Siyaset  | 30 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ermeni Propagandasının Amerika Boyutu Üzerine / Bilâl N. ŞİMŞİR   | 20 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ermeni Sorunuyla İlgili İngiliz Belgeleri (1912-1923) / British Documents on Armenian Question (1912-1923) / Tolga BAŞAK                    | 30 TRY  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Türk Ermeni İlişkileri Üzerine Ömer Engin Lütem Konferansları 2023 / Editör: Alev Kılıç   | 200 TRY |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sovyet Sonrası Ukrayna'da Devlet, Toplum ve Siyaset / Değişen Dinamikler, Dönüşen Kimlikler / Editörler: Ayşegül AYDINGÜN - İsmail AYDINGÜN | 40 TRY  |

## Contact

Address: Süleyman Nazif Sokak No: 12/B Daire: 3-4 06550 Çankaya / ANKARA  
Telephone: 0312 438 50 23 - 24 • Fax: 0312 438 50 26  
E-mail: [terazi yayincilik@gmail.com](mailto:terazi yayincilik@gmail.com)

## Account Number:

Terazi Yayıncılık Garanti Bankası A.Ş. Çankaya /Ankara Şubesi  
Account No: 181 /6296007 IBAN No: TR960006200018100006296007

Postal Check Account No: 5859221



**AVİM**  
AVRASYA İNCELEMELERİ MERKEZİ  
CENTER FOR EURASIAN STUDIES



[www.avim.org.tr](http://www.avim.org.tr)



ISSN: 1303-5304



9 771303 530402

Price in Turkey: 200 TL  
Price Abroad, incl. Postage: 60 USD