

ANCA PRESSURING DISNEY PLUS WITH HATE SPEECH

Tuğçe TECİMER

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Blog No: 46
14.08.2023

Tuğçe TECİMER ÖZÜBERK(*)

AVİM Trainee Program Participant

This is the English translation of a Turkish language article that was originally published by AVİM on 2 August 2023.

The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) continues to demonstrate its hostile and aggressive sentiment against Türkiye through various channels, including social media.[1] The pressure that ANCA has recently put on Disney Plus to cancel the Atatürk TV series project goes beyond intolerance and constitutes a new example of its well-known hostility towards Turks. ANCAs recent move is an indication that the organization does not in any way refrain from hate speech in any way when it comes to getting what it wants. This US-based organization does not hesitate to cross the lines of international rules of decorum as it distorts historical events for its own political purposes and pettily carries out propaganda against different cultural and historical perspectives. The fact that its actions are nevertheless being condoned contradicts the concepts of freedom of thought and expression.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, an invaluable and exceptional figure to the people of Türkiye, played a key role in building present-day Türkiye and took substantial steps in the modernization of the country. Therefore, to make a film or TV series about him is a sign of

respect for the historical legacy of the Turkish people. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who is the founder and historical leader of the Republic of Türkiye, is also known and revered across the world. As mentioned in a previous article of ours, UNESCOs declaration of the year 1981 as the Centenary Year of Atatürk's Birth is one of the most concrete examples of this. [2]

Attacking historical figures with hate speech does not only abuse the memories of said figures, but can also create the danger of division and enmity between peoples. ANCAs previously mentioned pressure campaign is only one of its many antagonistic activities. The organization tries to retain its influence by exerting pressure both through its video broadcasts and writings. This was exemplified when ANCA issued condemnation against famous business magnate and investor Elon Musk and attacked him on social media, as a response to him coming to Türkiye to sign a technology agreement and visiting Anıtkabir (the Mausoleum of Atatürk).[3] It is thus apparent that ANCA does not shy away from indiscriminately using various coercive methods against individuals and organizations that it believes to be in conflict with its interests.

Forms of expression such as art, literature and cinema are prominent ways for people to convey their thoughts and experiences. ANCAs attempt to prevent the TV series on Atatürk from being televised on Disney Plus, at a time when no one even has any idea about the series content, is an attack on both art and artists. Through its censorship and intimidation, ANCA is obstructing artistic freedom and trying to sway the worlds artists in line with its own interests by pressuring them through its social media campaign.

On the other hand; TV series, movies, and other broadcasts containing allegations targeting Turkish history continue to appear frequently in different settings. Such productions are being supported directly or indirectly by the radical Armenian organizations in the US. For instance, in the superhero TV series on Disney Plus titled *Moon Knight*, the phrase Armenian Genocide was inserted in a forced manner even though it had nothing to do with the script. It is known that Turks living abroad are subjected to serious societal pressure due to such allegations. Discourses and initiatives that make unfair claims against Turks should not be evaluated solely within their own scopes. It should be kept in mind that they can lead to severe consequences as a result of creating an anti-Turkish and anti-Türkiye public perception.

During this period when intensive efforts are being carried out for achieving normalization in the Türkiye-Armenia relations, such pressure attempts will undoubtedly have far from constructive repercussions, distance societies from each other, and negatively affect the normalization process. Another fact that should be kept in mind is that ANCAs activities aiming to disrupt the normalization process will negatively affect the Armenians of Armenia rather than Armenians of the Diaspora. ANCA claims that it strives for the interests of Americans of Armenian descent and all Armenians in general. In this respect, it would be more beneficial for the organization to put aside its hostile stance against Türkiye and work towards the interests of its kinfolk living in Armenia.

All in all, ANCA pressuring Disney Plus to cancel the Atatürk TV series is a case that displays intolerance and the distortion of history for political purposes. In the interests of

both countries, third parties should no longer be allowed to sabotage the positive developments that are sought for the Türkiye-Armenia relations. Moreover, it must not be overlooked that the leniency shown to this radical diaspora by the various countries they reside in also makes the said countries responsible for their actions. Disney Plus has a significant audience and following in Türkiye. With regards to protecting its image around the world as well as in Türkiye, it is important for Disney Plus to reject the demands of ANCA (whose long-standing hostile position and aims against Türkiye is known), to avoid losing its large Turkish audience by harming its image based on political issues, and to continue the Atatürk project at an accelerated pace.

(*) İstanbul University, Institute of Social Sciences, PhD Student in the Program for General Turkish History

(**) Image: "What is Hate Speech?, United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/hate-speech/understanding-hate-speech/what-is-hate-speech

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[1] ANCA [@ANCA_DC], Calling on @DisneyPlus to Cancel Its Series Glorifying Mustafa Kemal Ataturk - a Turkish Dictator and Genocide Killer with the Blood of Millions of #Greek #Armenian #Assyrian #Chaldean #Syriac #Aramean #Maronite and Other #Christian Martyrs on His Hands. IMDB: ✳https://T.Co/6KxPbd4iMu, Tweet, *Twitter*, 29 June 2023, https://twitter.com/ANCA_DC/status/1674459393952186368.

[2] The Armenian National Committee Of America's (ANCA) Outrageous Smear Campaign Against Disney Plus's Ataturk Series Project, *AVİM*, 13 July 2023, https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/THE-ARMENIAN-NATIONAL-COMMITTEE-OF-AMERICA-S-ANCA-OUTRAGEOUS-SMEAR-CAMPAIGN-AGAINST-DISNEY-PLUS-S-ATATURK-SERIES-PROJECT.

[3] ANCA Elon Muskın Türkiye Ziyaretini Kınadı, *Ermenihaber.am*, 28 November 2017, https://www.ermenihaber.am/tr/news/2017/11/28/ANCA-Elon-Musk-T%C3%BCrkiye/118113.

About the author:

To cite this article: Tuğçe TECİMER. 2026. "ANCA PRESSURING DISNEY PLUS WITH HATE SPEECH." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Blog No.2023 / 46. August 14. Accessed October 31, 2026. https://www.avim.org.tr/Blog/ANCA-PRESSURING-DISNEY-PLUS-WITH-HATE-SPEECH

Süleyman Nazif Sok. No: 12/B Daire 3-4 06550 Çankaya-ANKARA / TÜRKİYE
Tel: +90 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Fax**: +90 (312) 438 50 26
@avimorgtr
https://www.facebook.com/avrasyaincelemelerimerkezi
E-Posta: info@avim.org.tr
http://avim.org.tr

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