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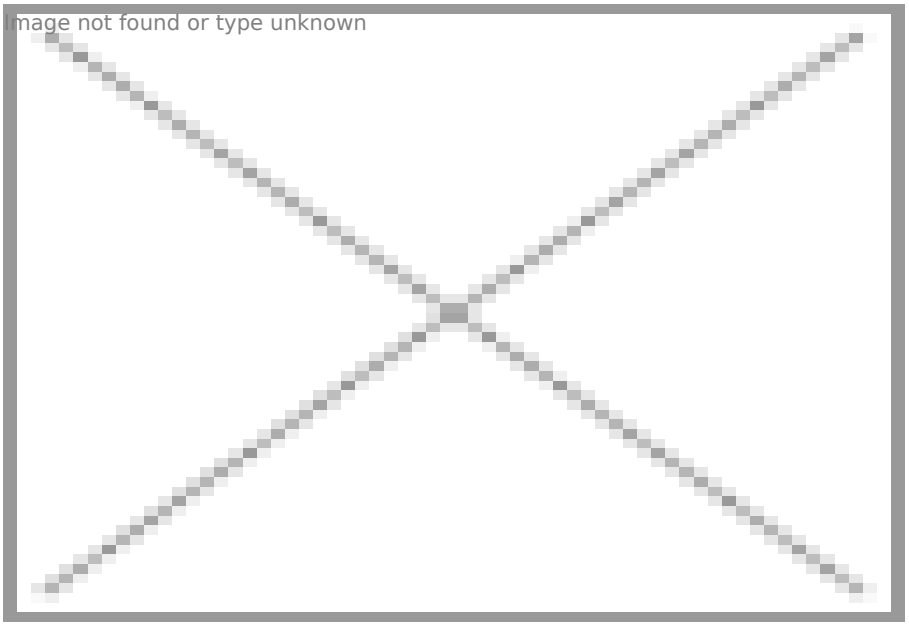
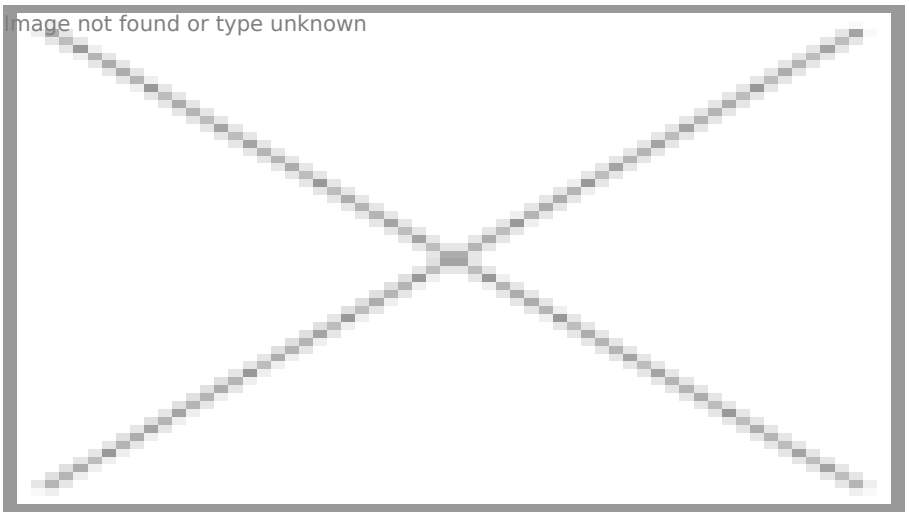
# ATASC STATEMENT REGARDING GAVIN NEWSOM'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO RELEASE A TERRRORIST SASSOUNIAN

17.03.2021

The Association of Turkish Americans of Southern California - ATASC (15 March 2021)

**The Association of Turkish Americans of Southern California (ATASC) and its chapters express its great concern about CA Governor Gavin Newsoms announcement to release a terrorist.**






**Hampig Sassounian was convicted of a premeditated murder of fatally shooting Turkish diplomat Kemal Arikan while he sat in his car at an intersection in Los Angeles.**

Previous judicial rulings to release Sassounian on parole were blocked by several California's governors, including incumbent Gavin Newsom who rejected his eligibility before .

Sassounians release decision is based on political considerations and it is not only reckless, but it also violates common sense, public safety, and justice while rewarding violent extremism and international terrorism.

The Secretary of State, Antony Blinken stated on March 11th;

To ensure the safety of the dedicated U.S. diplomats serving around the world, it has been the longstanding position of the United States to advocate that those who assassinate diplomats receive the maximum sentence possible, and that they serve those sentences without parole or early release.

Sassounian's crime was an expression of his hatred against the Turkish Republic, and people of Turkish and Turkic origin and Muslim heritage. To this day, Sassounian's public statements and his supporters continue to strike fear in Turkish and Muslim Californians. Due to ongoing security concerns, our local organizations have been forced to cancel concerts, lectures, and cultural events. Our children have been harassed and discriminated against in school settings. Our businesses have been a target of hate crime. The recent incident at Istanbul Cafe in Beverly Hills is a case in point. Many individual Turkish Americans have received death threats by other extremists of Armenian origins. When Sassounian is released, our Turkish American community will not be safe, both because Sassounian has vowed militant action once released, and also because it would embolden those who openly consider Sassounian a hero. During his trial a large number Armenian Americans supported his murderous action.

Sassounians release is a disturbing decision for the international fight against terrorism, murdered diplomat Kemal Arikans family, and more than half a million tax-paying Turkish Americans.

Mr. Arikan was among four Turkish diplomats assassinated on American soil, in addition to Los Angeles Consul General Mehmet Baydar, Los Angeles Vice Consul Bahadir Demir, and Boston Consul General Orhan Gunduz.

The assassinations occurred across the globe, including in the US, Austria, France, Italy, Spain, Lebanon, Greece, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Canada, Portugal, Iran, and the UK.

Pardoning such a terrorist will set a terrible precedent.

ATASC

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Kaynak/Source: