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THE MONUMENT IN OTTAWA

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During a ceremony held in Ottawa on September 20 in which Canadian Foreign Minister John Baird was also present, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu inaugurated a monument dedicated to Turkish Military Attaché Colonel Atilla Altıkat who was martyred in this city by Armenian terrorists in 1982. In a period starting in 1973 and continuing until the end of the 1980s, Turkish diplomats along with other Turkish officials abroad and their families were attacked by Armenian terrorists, 31 of them were murdered and tens were injured. The main reason for the terrorists targeting Turkish diplomats and officials was that they represented Turkey. In other words, it was considered that Turkey was being attacked and harmed personally through these individuals. Therefore, high-status officials were being targeted within the bounds of possibility. In fact, among those martyred were 5 ambassadors, 5 consul-generals and 1 military attaché (Colonel Altıkat). Although the main targets were Turkish official representatives, Armenian terrorists did not refrain from also attacking Turks with non-official status and foreigners and have caused 39 people to lose their lives and approximately 500 of them to be wounded. These terrorist activities which were greatly discussed during those years in Turkey drew little attention in foreign countries, especially in those places where the crimes were committed, and the terrorists who were able to be caught relatively received little penalty in the courts and after some of them were released, settled in Armenia and were generally treated as heroes. Although the genocide allegations and Armenian claims have continued to occupy Turkeys public opinion after the terror came to an end, these crimes were thrown to the background and entered a phase of oblivion. However, with the Foreign Ministry being at the forefront, official authorities have always been attentive of commemorating the Turkish martyrs. On the other hand, the authorities of those countries in which the crimes were committed not only have refrained from erecting a monument, but have even been reluctant to place a plaquette. The only reason for this is that the Armenians who are citizens of those countries oppose such action. This resistance being broken in Canada is a significant event and we hope that it will be the starting of a new phase in which Turkish martyrs will also be duly commemorated in other countries such as the US, France, Spain, Portugal, Belgium, the Netherlands, Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Switzerland, Austria, Australia, Lebanon, Iran and the Vatican.

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