SWEDEN BACKTRACKS ON RECOGNITION OF THE KILLINGS OF ARMENIANS, ASSYRIANS/SYRIACS/CHALDEANS AND PONTIC GREEKS AS GENOCIDE

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In May 2015, *Tidningarnas Telegrambyra*, national news agency of Sweden, reported that Sweden would set up an independent commission of experts, politicians and historians to investigate 1915 events. According to this report, Foreign Ministry spokesman Erik Boman said that the Swedish government had put aside the countrys decision from 2010 describing the 1915 killings as genocide and would act accordingly to the commissions results.[1]

On 11 March 2010, Swedish Parliament adopted a resolution that recognized the killings of the Armenians, Assyrians/Syriacs/Chaldeans and Pontic Greeks under the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1923 as genocide by 131 to 130 votes. The bill states that: [2]

> ☀□□□ 1915 genocide foremost engulfed Armenians, Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans and Pontic Greeks, but later came to also affect other minorities. It was the dream of a large Turanic Empire, Great Turan, which caused the Turkish leaders wanting to ethnically homogenize the remains of the decaying Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 19th century. This was achieved under the cover of the ongoing world war, when the Armenian, Assyrian/Syrian/Chaldean and Pontic Greek population of the empire were, almost entirely, annihilated. Researchers estimate that about 1,500,000 Armenians, between 250,000 and 500,000 Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans and about 350,000 Pontic Greeks have been killed or disappeared ☀ Furthermore, a Swedish recognition of the truth and a historic fact should not imply any hinder for either the reform work in Turkey or Turkey's EU negotiations. With basis in what we have stated above, we consider that Sweden should recognize the 1915 genocide against Armenians, Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans, and Pontic Greeks. This should the Parliament present as its consideration to the Government.
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> Furthermore, we do consider that Sweden should act internationally, within the framework for EU and UN, for an international recognition of the 1915 genocide against Armenians, Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans, and Pontic Greeks. This should the

Parliament present as its consideration to the Government.

As long as countries such as Sweden does not confront Turkey with the truth and the facts which are at hand, Turkey cannot go further on its path to an more open society, a better democracy and fully open up its possibilities for a membership in EU. Thus, Sweden should act for Turkey to recognize the 1915 genocide against Armenians, Assyrians/Syrians/Chaldeans, and Pontic Greeks. This should the Parliament present as its consideration to the Government.

Significantly, as a distinction from the other bills and resolutions on the Armenian Genocide, the bill of the Swedish Parliament referred also to Assyrians and Pontic Greeks.

The 1915 events and Armenian war losses are a widely debated issue among the experts. Given that there is no consensus on the topic, politicians, many of which hardly have in-depth knowledge about that particular period need avoid making undue comments. Likewise, for the parliaments leaving the issue to the experts would be wiser than passing resolutions to pursue certain policies. Thus, Swedens retreat from its 2010 resolution is a prudent step, because genocide is a legal term and as the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide determines, only the verdict of a competent tribunal, not an independent commission of experts, politicians and historians, can decide if an act is a crime of genocide or not.

[1] http://news.videonews.us/sweden-set-commission-1915-deaths-0812021.html (latest access 12.05.2015).

[2] http://www.armenian-genocide.org/Affirmation.414/current_category.7/affirmation_detail.html (latest access 12.05.2015).

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