AVİM Commentary • No: 2026 / 16 •

THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA, STATE CONTROL, AND THE LIMITS OF DIASPORA POLITICS

Teoman Ertuğrul TULUN

Analyst

Introduction

Debates on so □□□□□□ state □□□□□□□□□□ diaspora models have gained prominence in discussions of how states relate to their citizens and kindred communities abroad. This commentary engages with arguments advanced about the Turkish □□□□□□□□□□ approach to diaspora policies and assesses what can reasonably be regarded as a legitimate pattern of state □□□□□□□□ interaction. Against this conceptual background, the analysis turns to the specific case of the Armenian diaspora and its relationship with the Republic of Armenia, highlighting how particular configurations of activism and influence can generate tensions between sovereign decision □□□□□□ and expectations articulated from outside the country.

The Claim of a State-Controlled Diaspora Model

In the text under discussion, Türkiye and Azerbaijan are presented as operating a centrally directed state □□□□□□□□□□ diaspora model, in which diaspora organizations abroad function as coordinated extensions of state policy, like the arms of an octopus. [1] This depiction works with an implicit assumption: once a state establishes central mechanisms and institutions to engage its citizens or kin communities abroad, this is taken as evidence of manipulation or authoritarian control. Such a framing, however, overlooks a basic reality of international practice: sovereign states routinely create specialized bodies to sustain cultural, social, economic, and consular links with their citizens and related communities abroad, and these functions are both normal and legitimate in contemporary diplomacy.

State–Diaspora Relations

Building on the previous discussion, the analysis proceeds by normalizing what is often problematized in the state □□□□□□□□□□ diaspora narrative. If the mere existence of central institutions is treated as proof of manipulation, then almost every sovereign state would

fall under the same accusation, since it is standard practice to maintain official bodies responsible for citizens and related communities abroad.

Central coordination, in this view, is not inherently suspect; it enables legitimate functions such as cultural preservation, consular protection, economic cooperation, and structured political consultation. The real difficulty arises when diaspora activism itself ignores host □□□□□□□ laws and priorities and seeks to exercise direct leverage over homeland policy from a distance. From this perspective, the focus should therefore shift away from demonizing state institutions toward scrutinizing how diaspora actors use or misuse their influence on the homeland.[2]

The Specific Case of the Armenian Diaspora

When this general framework is applied to concrete cases, the Armenian diaspora stands out in several respects. Most members of this diaspora are not citizens of Armenia but of their respective host states, and thus their primary legal and political allegiance lies with those countries rather than with Yerevan. Despite this, certain influential segments seek a decisive voice in Armenias core sovereign decisions, including questions of borders, security, relations with neighbouring states, recognition policies, and historical claims. [3]

This situation generates a structural tension: communities located outside Armenia often advocate maximalist positions without directly bearing the costs of potential instability, renewed isolation, or conflict. In practice, such dynamics may narrow the Armenian governments room for pragmatic engagement with its neighbours and risk turning diaspora–homeland relations into a form of external tutelage over a sovereign state.[4]

Comparing Turkish and Armenian Diasporas

Against this backdrop, it becomes important to consider how different diaspora communities position themselves in their host societies and toward their homelands. Turkish communities abroad have, in general, prioritized integration, respect for the rule of law, and everyday coexistence within their host countries, while still maintaining strong cultural and emotional ties to Türkiye. [5]

By contrast, activism in parts of the Armenian diaspora has frequently been organized around hardline and exclusivist narratives vis □□□□□ Türkiye and Azerbaijan, with identity politics built on perpetual confrontation rather than accommodation. Persistent demonization and absolutist rhetoric in this context tend to harden positions, hinder reconciliation, and weaken incentives for compromise in Armenia and its neighbourhood. In addition, diaspora politics grounded in hostility and racialized discourse not only strains bilateral relations but also undermines the credibility of such actors in pluralistic, liberal-democratic environments.[6]

Sovereignty, Responsibility, and a Healthier Model

The discussion thus returns to the initial problematization of state □□□□□□□□□□ diaspora models with a clearer distinction between normal state practice and genuinely troubling patterns of activism. The fundamental question is not whether a state engages with its diaspora, but whether that engagement is consistent with sovereignty, democratic accountability, and the rule of law.

A sustainable approach requires diaspora actors, particularly in the Armenian case, to recognize the primacy of Armenias citizens in determining national priorities and risk assessments. Responsible engagement should support peace, normalization, and regional stability rather than constrain them through uncompromising demands and exclusionary narratives. Transparent, law □□□□□ diaspora policies on all sides, combined with a shift away from hostility □□□□□□ activism, can help neutralize external manipulation and open genuine space for reconciliation.

**Picture: Youtube*

[1] The California Courier Editorial Team, Armenian Diaspora and Dangers of a State □□□□□□□□□□ Diaspora Model The California Courier, January 21, 2026, accessed February 25, 2026, https://www.thecaliforniacourier.com/armenian-diaspora-and-dangers-of-a-state-controlled-diaspora-model-youtube-video/

[2] Alev Kılıç The Armenıan Dıasporas Statements: Not For Reconcılıatıon, But To Seek Revenge, AVİM Commentary, February 08, 2013, https://avim.org.tr/public/en/Yorum/THE-ARMENIAN-DIASPORA-S-STATEMENTS-NOT-FOR-RECONCILIATION-BUT-TO-SEEK-REVENGE; AVİM Editorial Attempts At Dıasporızıng Turkısh Armenıans □ II , AVİM Commentary, January 19, 2019, https://avimbulten.org/public/en/Yorum/ATTEMPTS-AT-DIASPORIZING-TURKISH-ARMENIANS-II

[3] Alev Kılıç, Armenia And The Armenian Diaspora, AVİM Commentary, October 08, 2012, https://www.avimbulten.org/public/en/Yorum/ARMENIA-AND-THE-ARMENIAN-DIASPORA

[4] Turgut Kerem Tuncel, Pashinyan Calls On Armenian Diaspora To Behave Responsibly , AVİM Commentary, October 04, 2024, https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/PASHINYAN-CALLS-ON-ARMENIA-DIASPORA-TO-BEHAVE-WITH-RESPONSIBILITY

[5] Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun , ATTEMPTS AT DIASPORIZING TURKISH ARMENIANS □ III, AVİM Commentary, May 07, 2019, https://avim.org.tr/public/en/Yorum/ATTEMPTS-AT-DIASPORIZING-TURKISH-ARMENIANS-III

[6] AVİM Editorial Armenian-Kurdish Coalition In Syria: Turcophobia Fuels The Hostile Feelings Of Some Ill-Minded Armenian Nationalists, AVİM Commentary, January 04, 2019, https://avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/ARMENIAN-KURDISH-COALITION-IN-SYRIA-TURCOPHOBIA-FUELS-THE-HOSTILE-FEELINGS-OF-SOME-ILL-MINDED-ARMENIAN-NATIONALISTS

About the Author :

Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun is an analyst at Ankara-based think-tank Center for Eurasian Studies. Dr. Teoman Ertuğrul Tulun received his Ph.D. in Political Science and Public Administration from İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University in Ankara. His area of research include European Union Studies, Globalization, Xenophobia, Hate Speech Studies and International Relations.

To cite this article: TULUN, Teoman Ertuğrul. 2026. "THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA, STATE CONTROL, AND THE LIMITS OF DIASPORA POLITICS." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Commentary No.2026 / 16. February 27. Accessed November 22, 2026. https://www.avim.org.tr/public/index.php/en/Yorum/THE-ARMENIAN-DIASPORA-STATE-CONTROL-AND-THE-LIMITS-OF-DIASPORA-POLITICS

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-Mail: info@avim.org.tr
http://avim.org.tr

© 2009-2025 Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) All Rights Reserved