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**DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA**  
**ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND CO-OPERATION IN EUROPE**

**Statement**

**On Commemoration of the Centennial of the Armenian Genocide  
delivered by Ambassador Arman Kirakossian at the 1049th Meeting of the  
OSCE Permanent Council**

April 30, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

The Remembrance and Education of Genocide is an important part of the OSCE human dimension commitments and we would like to draw the attention of the Permanent Council to the worldwide commemoration of the centennial of the Armenian Genocide.

The commemorative events took place worldwide including in the OSCE region from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Numerous conferences, religious services, commemorations, rallies have been held at the governmental, parliamentary, community and civil society levels. Political statements commemorating victims of the Armenian Genocide were delivered by world leaders, Parliaments, and representatives of international organizations.

The commemorative events evolved around four themes: remembrance, gratitude, prevention and revival.

There were three key remembrance ceremonies that delivered worldwide message of memory and truth. The major religious services have been held respectively by His Holiness Pope Francis in the Saint Peter's Cathedral on April 12<sup>th</sup> and by His Holiness Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Pontific and the Catholicos paid tribute to the Armenian martyrs of the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Armenian Apostolic Church canonized the one and half million victims of Genocide thus recovering dignity of people who were killed because of their religious and ethnic distinctiveness.

On April 24<sup>th</sup> the representatives of 60 delegations including heads of states, parliaments, governments and ministers paid tribute to the perished innocent at the Memorial of the Victims of Genocide in Yerevan. Along with the President Sargsyan, President Anastasiades of Cyprus, President Nikolic of Serbia, President Holland of France and President Putin of Russia delivered statements that shared pain and memory with the descendants of victims through acknowledging crime perpetrated against them.

Mr. Chairman,

The memory and truth are essential in overcoming the pain and healing the scars of genocide. As it was stressed by Pope Francis at April 12<sup>th</sup> religious service: “It is necessary, and indeed a duty, to honour their memory, for whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!”

This powerful message is credible because it is true. It guides us through despair and crude realism of geopolitical calculations into perspectives of humanity and unity of international community in truth. The past days showed to what extent the international community can unite itself just for pronouncing the truth regardless of political or ideological considerations. The statements of German President Joachim Gauck as well as the declaration of the Austrian Parliament showed that nations who were 100 years ago allies of the Ottoman Empire are ready to face their part of history just for the sake of truth.

We have approached the centennial of Armenian Genocide with the renewed faith in humanity and gratitude to all those who stood by us to this day. As it was pointed out by President Sargsyan: ”Human memory is a unique sieve of history. History shall always remember and cherish all the individuals, countries, and international organizations that came to help at the hardest times and saved not only the physical existence of millions of people, but also their ruined faith in humanity”.

We remember with gratitude those brave French sailors who saved the Armenian population of Musa Dagh, those representatives of Russian intelligentsia who tried to save cultural heritage of the Armenian people, the American Near East Relief organization which literally gathered thousands of orphans from the desert of Syria and gave them new life. We haven't forgotten neither the Turkish officials and many ordinary Turks who courageously displayed their morality and openly defied the cruel orders while protecting Armenians.

We are grateful to all those who associate themselves with humanists such as Fridtjof Nansen, Johannes Lepsius, Maria Jacobsen and many known and unknown representatives of Red Cross, missionaries and all people of good will.

Mr. Chairman,

Armenia committed itself to the prevention of the crime of genocide and made it as a priority. The protection of the population which can be a subject of genocide is firmly embedded in the Armenian security strategy-

The Global forum against crime of Genocide which brought together 600 parliamentarians amongst them Presidents and Vice-Presidents of Parliaments, practitioners, diplomats, academicians, prominent genocide scholars from over 50 countries addressed the issue of prevention on April 22-23 in Yerevan. Senior representatives of international organizations including Thorbjorn Yagland, Secretary

General of the Council of Europe also attended and addressed the forum. The Global forum adopted an important declaration that was circulated by my Delegation.

Participants of the forum widely acknowledged that the denial of genocides profoundly hampers prevention efforts. The current genocidal acts perpetrated against Christian and other communities by terrorist organizations in Syria and Iraq on exactly the same territories where final phase of the Armenian Genocide took place are stark reminders that denial of the crime and dehumanization of victims do not merely belong to history.

The UN Human Rights Council resolution on genocide prevention adopted a month ago clearly establishes that attempts to deny or justify genocide may risk undermining the fight against impunity reconciliation and efforts to prevent genocide.

Mr. Chairman,

The idea of revival has always guided us in our efforts to overcome consequences of genocide. Peace, human rights and opportunities of economic and sustainable development should be secured to create enabling environment to this end.

Since its independence Armenia advocated the establishment of diplomatic relations with Turkey without any preconditions. Yet Turkey closed its land borders and refused to ratify the Zurich Protocols signed in 2009. The centennial became yet another missed opportunity for Turkey to embark on reconciliation. Turkish President left unanswered the invitation of the Armenian President to join Armenian people and international community in commemoration of April 24<sup>th</sup> in Yerevan.

In their addresses to the Armenian community, the Turkish authorities failed short to acknowledge the crime, to name perpetrators or to properly offer apology. Moreover, the official reaction of Turkey to remembrance statements and declarations of various Parliaments and world leaders are very disappointing and regretful indeed.

Mr. Chairman,

We firmly believe that Turkey has a better choice than to justify or associate itself with those who perpetrated Genocide.

Turkish civil society shows a brave example here. I remember that at the funeral of Hrand Dink hundreds of thousands Turks were shouting “we are all Hrand, we are all Armenians.” Recovering the dignity of victims not making excuses for perpetrators can lead us to much anticipated reconciliation.

Thank You.