

## ARF statement on Protocols

The ARF Central Committee Eastern Region releases the following declaration on the occasion of the October 3, 2009 meeting in New York City between Armenia President Serzh Sarkisian and eastern United States Armenian organizations to discuss the Armenia-Turkey protocols.

Armenia's President Serzh Sargsyan has called a meeting with various Armenian organizations on October 3, 2009 in New York City to discuss the Armenia-Turkey protocols. Representatives from the ARF Central Committee Eastern Region and its affiliated organizations have been invited to the meeting and plan to attend.

But, let us be clear: We will attend this meeting because we do not want to forgo an opportunity to voice our strong and uncompromising opposition to these dangerous protocols. We will do so directly and forthrightly, letting the President know that the protocols he defends actually betray the national rights of the entire Armenian Nation: Armenia, the Armenian Diaspora, and Nagorno-Karabagh.

President Sargsyan has claimed that he is conducting his speaking tour of the Diaspora's largest communities to hear their views on the protocols. However, normally stakeholders are engaged to provide input into critical policy decisions before policy formulation and public announcement, not after their release. Such illogical timing is compounded by additional claims that the government will not entertain any attempts to amend these protocols.

Viewed in this light, the President's upcoming visit is not only late, but lacking in political and moral sincerity, particularly when Armenia and Turkey have announced that the timetable for protocol signing and ratification has been accelerated to occur sometime during the next two weeks.

The Eastern Region of the United States is home to the Armenian Diaspora's oldest organized Armenian communities, built by 1915 Armenian Genocide survivors. Those survivors were devoted to sustaining the Armenian Nation and fortifying her citizens with pride and dignity so that one day Ottoman Turkey's planned murder of 1.5 million Armenian victims would be avenged with the perpetrators' apology and fair reparations.

Unfortunately, several other Diasporan organizations have equivocated, even embraced the Armenia-Turkey protocols, sometimes dismissing the ARF's opposition as misguided. We consider it likely that – for whatever reason – some will continue to maintain that unjustified position.

The ARF has a record of seeking consensus and compromise on important national issues, when it has been politically necessary for the greater good of the Armenian Nation.

## ARF statement on Protocols

However, some issues cannot be compromised, especially when they pertain to our fundamental rights as a nation. With this in mind, the ARF opposes, without hesitation, the following provisions of the protocols:

\* The agreement that Armenia will formally recognize Turkey's current border, thus validating the dispossession of Western Armenia and waiving the right of the Armenian Nation to negotiate fully over Armenian Genocide reparations.

\* The agreement that the Armenian Genocide will be assessed "impartially" and "scientifically" using historic documents, as if the fact of the Genocide has not been researched in that manner exhaustively already. Such a formulation opens the path toward rendering the Genocide debatable.

\* The agreement that Armenia will defend the integrity of its neighboring nations' territorial claims, thereby jeopardizing the self-determination of the people of Nagorno-Karabagh.

We cannot fathom the protocols' support by any Armenian who has marched in an April 24 demonstration; supported successful passage of a federal or state Armenian Genocide resolution; wept with a Genocide survivor recalling the horror of seeing her village decimated and emptied; donated funds to a nursery school in Nagorno-Karabagh, or paid tribute to a young Armenian who sacrificed his very life for our Armenian Cause.

Armenia's ratification and signing of the protocols will jeopardize the past work of generations of Armenians to bring the fullest measure of justice for the Armenian Nation. Likewise, it will erode the future efforts of generations who would continue these moral and politically just efforts. Instead, the protocols will satisfy the articulated aims of today's Turkish Government to silence the enduring and still unanswered "Armenian Question."

On Saturday, October 3, the ARF Eastern Region Central Committee will communicate this message to President Sargsyan. We are confident that our community members will support that message and stand with us in the uncertain days ahead.

ARF Central Committee  
Eastern Region, USA  
Sept. 29, 2009