



CONGRES DES CANADIENS ARMÉNIENS • CONGRESS OF CANADIAN ARMENIANS

PRESIDENT SARGSYAN OF ARMENIA CONSULTS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF ARMENIAN COMMUNITIES IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES

On October 3, 2009, President Serzh Sargsyan of the Republic of Armenia met in New York City with invited representatives of Armenian communities from across Canada and the United States for consultations on the recently announced protocols to establish diplomatic relations with the Republic of Turkey and the opening of the current border between the two countries. Vice-Chairman Pierre Akkelian represented the Congress of Canadian Armenians at the meeting.

The government of Armenia is motivated by geopolitical and economic concerns to reach an agreement with Turkey, including national security and the need to improve the flow of trade for the landlocked country. President Sargsyan made it clear, however, that there can be no preconditions by either side to any agreement that is signed as a result of these protocols. These include the unalienable right of the Armenian people to have the Armenian Genocide recognized, the validity of any claims that arise as a result of this recognition, and the right of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to live freely as expressed when they exercised their legitimate right for self-determination.

During the five hour meeting, a wide variety of concerns and views were expressed by those present. President Sargsyan was most attentive, and presented well articulated explanations to all questions. To skeptics, he explained in detail the significance of contentious parts of the agreement and asked critics "not to look for hair in an egg where there is none". He also expressed his thanks for the helpful input that he received.

"I am impressed with the fortitude and candor of the President", said Pierre Akkelian. "He is a visionary leader, a genuine wartime hero and an honourable defender of the Armenian nation."

The Congress of Canadian Armenians supports President Sargsyan and his government in these efforts, confident that they will do what is best for Armenia and its population, and that they are mindful of the concerns of Armenian people around the world. It recognizes that the government of Armenia faces difficult challenges in the weeks ahead as it negotiates the details of an agreement to

build improved relations between Armenia and Turkey, while at the same time safeguarding the ongoing fundamental and historic rights of the Armenian people. It remains cautiously optimistic, and will continue to closely monitor developments.



President Serzh Sargsyan with some of the representatives from Canada: (left to right) Me. Berge Papazian (AGBU Central Board), Silva Mangassarian (AGBU Montreal Chapter), Vahan Kololian (Mosaic Institute), Ara Boyajian (Diocese of the Armenian Church of Canada), Antranik Sirinian (Fondation Hayastan Canada), President Sargsyan, Hratch Torikian (Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Eastern Region), Bishop Bagrat Galstania (Primate of the Armenian Church of Canada), Pierre Akkelian (Congress of Canadian Armenians), Barkev Nazaretian (Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Montreal Chapter), Hrair Der Kevorkian (Armenian Democratic Liberal Party Montreal Chapter).

Established in 2004, the Congress of Canadian Armenians is comprised of many of the large Canadian Armenian organizations. It serves as a united voice to present Armenian issues to the Canadian public and to promote Armenian interests.

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