



ARMENIAN ASSEMBLY OF AMERICA

1140 19th STREET, NW • WASHINGTON, DC 20036-6608 • (202) 393-3434 • FAX: (202) 638-4904 • E-mail: info@aaainc.org

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Web: www.aaainc.org

CONTACT: Christine Kojoian
Phone: (202) 393-3434
E-mail: ckojoian@aaainc.org

SENATOR BIDEN INTRODUCES RESOLUTION CONDEMNING HRANT DINK'S MURDER & HONORING HIS LEGACY

Washington, DC – Today, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Joseph R. Biden, Jr. (D-DE) introduced legislation condemning the assassination of Hrant Dink and honoring his legacy of tolerance and peaceful change.

“We commend Senator Biden for spearheading this important legislation,” said Executive Director Bryan Ardouny. “The atmosphere that led to this killing must be changed, starting with the repeal of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. As a moral leader, America must ensure that minority populations in Turkey are afforded every protection.”

Dink, who worked hard to foster dialogue and understanding between Armenians and Turks, was gunned down outside his newspaper office on January 19 in Istanbul, Turkey. An outspoken advocate for democratic reform, Dink stood trial several times for his public comments on the genocide and was convicted in October 2005 for “insulting Turkishness” under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code. He received a six-month suspended sentence and was set to appear in court again in March 2007 for affirming the Armenian Genocide.

“Hrant Dink was a leading voice in Turkey’s Armenian community and an eloquent advocate for human rights, press freedom, and democracy,” Senator Biden told the Assembly. “His assassination was an outrage and a tragedy. Hrant’s legacy deserves the Senate’s respect. His murder demands our action.”

The Senate bill is similar to H. Res. 102, which was introduced by Congressman Joseph Crowley (D-NY) on January 29 with the support of the Armenian Assembly. The Biden resolution condemns Dink’s assassination and supports Turkey’s pledge to conduct an exhaustive investigation into his killing. Furthermore, the legislation urges Turkey to take appropriate action to protect freedom of speech in Turkey by repealing Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which criminalizes public discussion on the Armenian Genocide. The resolution also calls on Turkey to reestablish full diplomatic, political and economic relations with Armenia.

For more information on Hrant Dink, including Assembly statements, media coverage, photographs, and video from the memorial service at St. Mary’s Armenian Apostolic Church, please visit the ***Hrant Dink Resource Page*** on the Assembly’s Web site at <http://www.aaainc.org/httpdocs/hrantdink.htm>.

The Armenian Assembly of America is the largest Washington-based nationwide organization promoting public understanding and awareness of Armenian issues. It is a 501 (c) (3) tax-exempt membership organization.

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NR#2007-022

Editor's Note: Below is the full text of the Biden Resolution, which was introduced today in the United States Senate.

110TH CONGRESS

S. RES.

RESOLUTION

Condemning the murder of Turkish-Armenian journalist and human rights advocate Hrant Dink and urging the people of Turkey to honor his legacy of tolerance.

Whereas Hrant Dink was a respected, eloquent advocate for press freedom, human rights, and reconciliation;

Whereas, in 1996, Mr. Dink founded the weekly bilingual newspaper Agos and, as the paper's editor in chief, used the paper to provide a voice for Turkey's Armenian community;

Whereas Mr. Dink was a strong proponent of rapprochement between Turks and Armenians and worked diligently to improve relations between those communities;

Whereas Mr. Dink's commitment to democratic values, nonviolence, and freedom in the media earned him widespread recognition and numerous international awards;

Whereas Mr. Dink was prosecuted under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code for speaking about the Armenian Genocide;

Whereas, notwithstanding hundreds of threats to Mr. Dink's life and safety, he remained a steadfast proponent of pluralism and tolerance;

Whereas Mr. Dink was assassinated outside the offices of Agos in Istanbul, Turkey, on January 19, 2007;

Whereas tens of thousands of people in Turkey of many ethnicities protested Mr. Dink's killing and took to the streets throughout the country to honor his memory;

Whereas the Government of Turkey has pledged to undertake a full investigation into the murder of Mr. Dink;

Whereas the Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has stated that when Mr. Dink was shot, "a bullet was fired at freedom of thought and democratic life in Turkey";

Whereas the Foreign Minister of Armenia, Vartan Oskanian, stated that Mr. Dink "lived his life in the belief that there can be understanding, dialogue and peace amongst peoples"; and

Whereas Mr. Dink's tragic death affirmed the importance of promoting the values that he championed in life: Now, therefore, be it

1 Resolved, That the Senate –

(1) condemns the murder of Hrant Dink as a shameful act of cowardice perpetrated with contempt for law, justice, and decency;

(2) supports the pledge of the Government of Turkey to conduct an exhaustive investigation into the assassination of Mr. Dink and to prosecute those responsible;

(3) urges the Government of Turkey to repeal Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code and work diligently to foster a more open intellectual environment in the country that is conducive to the free exchange of ideas;

(4) recognizes the decision of the Government of Turkey to invite senior Armenian religious and political figures to participate in memorial services for Mr. Dink;

(5) calls on the Government of Turkey to act in the interest of regional security and prosperity and reestablish full diplomatic, political, and economic relations with the Government of Armenia; and

(6) urges the people of Turkey to honor Mr. Dink's legacy of tolerance.

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