

## **Turkish ambassador: Give all sides a hearing**

In response to an inquiry by the Advocate, the Turkish ambassador to the U.S. issued the following statement:

It was surprising and disappointing when, on August 21, ADL abruptly changed its longtime position regarding the historical interpretation of the events of 1915 – even though the organization appeared later to recalibrate its course.

There is a moral argument in supporting efforts to shed light on this period by a genuinely sincere and thorough scholarly inquiry making use of all evidence, foremost the Ottoman, Armenian and other archives. Our ultimate responsibility is to seek out the truth and engender reconciliation. We owe this to our past and future generations. ADL and many prominent historians have agreed with us that the world has yet to see a full review of the historical record. That's why Prime Minister Erdogan proposed on April 10, 2005, to Armenia's President Robert Kocharian the creation of a Joint Commission of Historians to establish the facts of the Armenian and Turkish tragedy, in order to "shed light on a disputed period of history and also constitute a step towards contributing to the normalization of relations between our countries, and... leave to our future generations a peaceful and friendly environment in which tolerance and mutual respect shall prevail." Then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul subsequently invited other countries, including the United States, to participate in this commission. The response from the Armenian government has been negative. We need the support of all interested in this effort. That is why, on a positive note, I am glad that ADL has expressed support to Turkey's proposal.

In this context, the resolution in Congress to pass judgment on the events of 1915 in the Ottoman Empire is an effort to rewrite history by a political organ. What's more, the Congress will be asked to do so with a selective and factually incorrect dossier. It is heartening that ADL has affirmed that "the force and passion of the debate today leaves us more convinced than ever that this issue does not belong in a forum such as the United States Congress."

Even in our surprise and disappointment, we maintain our strong desire to deepen our relationship with the Jewish community – in the U.S., in Israel and around the world. The Turkish Jewish community is an enriching and integral part of the Turkish society. The exemplary relationship between Turks and Jews everywhere for over 500 years is strong enough to endure beyond this episode. As such, we expect the Jewish organizations to give all sides of the debate the benefit of the doubt and stand against an act of great injustice to a friendly nation in the Congress, and in public opinion, without a thorough examination of all facts.

Nabi Sensoy is the Republic of Turkey's Ambassador to the United States.