

## **Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Kars**

Brigadier General Kazim Karabekir, former Commander of the First Caucasian Corps and Commander of the 15th Corps, described the atrocities and genocide committed at Kars by Armenians in the Report delivered to the American Delegation as follows:

"Armenians put fire to every part of Kars and did not refrain from committing such savagery as putting our poor prisoners to death at the railroad station. We occupied Kars in the evening of April 25, 1918. On April 26, I myself wandered about in Kars. Every part is burning. At the railroad station some one hundred Turkish soldiers taken prisoners were put to death after being tormented. Moreover, we have also found some fifty corpses belonging to muslim population thrown into the Kars stream in the vicinity of the waterfall, some 20 meters to the west of the Headquarters of the Fortified Place of Kars at Kaleensesi."

Now let us make a quotation, in this respect, from the book published by the Eastern Command of the Government of the National Assembly which relates the atrocities committed by Armenians:

"The Kars (National) Soviet Government fell on April 13, 1919 the Parliament house being unexpectedly raided and the members of the government caught and exiled to Malta by the British. Three days later, the Armenian General Osebyan entered Kars and General Korganof, one of the Tashnak Armenians, was placed in the office of government as governor. Within a week Armenians resumed atrocities again."

The document (*BOA. HR. SYS. HU, kr. 110, dos.12-1, nr. 2 (See: Annex-8)*) dated March 6, 1915, kept in the Ottoman Archives, is concerned with the atrocities and genocide committed by Armenians at Kars and its environs: "The number of muslims massacred at Kars and Ardahan reaches 30.000; the Ottoman prisoners of war entrusted to Armenians for being kept have been treated roughly and cruelly and killed with rifle butts; Armenian and Greek soldiers in the Ottoman Army let themselves be taken prisoners by Russians so that they might leak information to them; as for the Caucasian Armenians, they first surrendered themselves to the Ottomans deliberately and then escaped back so as to inform Russians." Another document (*BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 4 (See: Annex-9)*) dated July 4, 1919 about the atrocities committed at Kars and its environs by Armenians:

"Armenians committed atrocities against the muslims living in Kars, Kaghizman and Nahjivan; and the frightened muslims, getting ready to emigrate from Kars and Ighdir, were not in safety owing to hunger and possible Armenian attacks; being informed of the situation, the British representative has confirmed it and would go to the neighbourhood of Kars and Kaghizman to see the situation on the spot."

Yet another archive document (*BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 7 (See: Annex-10)*) testifies to the fact that Armenians massacred muslims and plundered their goods at Kars and its environs:

"Armenians killed muslims living at Kars on various pretexts and gathered the youth at Kars and Sarikamish and massacred them and annihilated a number of notables and forced people to hand over their horses, oxen and sheep as a wartime contribution and killed those who opposed and used force to seize the weapons of the people in the neighbourhood of Zengezur and Nahjivan."

Another document (*BOA. HR. SYS. HU, 136, 1919 VII 8 (See: Annex-11)*) tells that

"The Armenian Commander at Kaghizman wrote a letter to Mahmut Bey, chief of the Zilan tribe, informing him that he should either surrender or be ready for war; the 12th Division asked Mahmut Bey to assure itself that measures were taken against the assault and perseverance

would be shown; Armenian bands raided the villages of Pozat, Mescidli, Gulyantepe, Kurudere as well as the four villages attached to Akchakale and killed the people plundering their money, goods, household goods and animals."

Upon the genocide perpetrated at Erzurum, Erzincan and Bayazit by Armenians, the newspaper "Kaspi" reported the events in its issue dated March 20, 1918 and demanded that massacres should be stopped:*(News appeared in the issue of 20 March 1918 of the Newspaper "Kaspi" [Hazar]. It is being published in Turkish for the first time. (See: Annex-12)*

"About the occupied areas of Turkey:

"Last January, The Muslim Committee at Tblisi complained to the National Armenian Soviet that they recently received alarming news from occupied Turkish regions saying that local muslims were being terribly oppressed by armed Armenian forces. Delegates from Erzurum, Erzincan and Bayazit who took part in the last session of the Committee submitted a detailed report that with the departure of the Russian forces from the said region Armenian detachments took their place and, after that, local muslim population began living in extremely hard conditions.

The delegates told that it had become a daily routine work for Armenians to kill the local muslim population, to plunder their goods and to oppress them. The terrorised, impoverished and starving people, unable to raise any objection, were being robbed of their last portion of food under the pretext that soldiers need them. Unfortunately, the said abnormal conditions have been confirmed by the official Muslim organisations on the front as well as by the impartial persons coming from the war zone. It is only natural that the Muslims living in the Caucasus and the Muslim Committee at Tblisi representing them are concerned about the fate of the unprotected muslim people who have lived for four years under Russian occupation and suffered so much injustice inflicted upon by the Russian. Thinking that such mean acts had been perpetrated so far by a number of individual groups only encouraged by the tolerance shown occasionally by the Russians, the Muslims living in the Caucasus have put up with them. But now, following the establishment of the national military units, incidents have assumed a totally different character and became unbearable. Nowadays, regarding even individual incidents as national problems, people make them inextricable. Having taken all this into consideration, the Muslim Committee at Tblisi has asked the Armenian National Soviet to take necessary measures so that Armenian military units may not oppress the muslim population living in the areas of Turkey occupied by Russia.

The Muslim Committee at Tblisi is confident that, now that a peace treaty is about to be concluded with Turkey, the Armenian National Soviet will put an end to all the unusual conditions which might harm the dialog between the two nations living together at a time when a new foundation is being laid down, a foundation which will bring peace to all the nations trying to develop their mutual interests and preparing for a new and free life."