

Dear compatriots:

For the past several months the attention of Armenia and the Armenians worldwide was focused on the ongoing process of the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations and in particular the two initialed Protocols. All parts and layers of the Armenian nation answered our call to open a public debate on the documents and engaged in it. We saw a new strong wave of a debate over the smaller and bigger issues which concern Armenia and the Armenians.

The debate included a large variety of issues not related to the Armenian-Turkish negotiations but concerning the whole Armenian nation. This process caused and triggered a new, engaged discussion on the place and the role of Armenia and the Armenians, the present and the future of Armenia and the Armenians. As a result, the world saw and understood that, when it comes to the normalization of the Armenian-Turkish relations, they have to deal not just with Armenia with its three million population, but with the ten million Armenians. And let no one ignore the fact that, contrary to any slogans, the Armenian nation is united in its goals and is strong with its sons and daughters. And let no one try to split Armenia and our brothers and sisters in the Diaspora in presenting their concern over the future of Armenia as an attempt to impose something on the Republic Armenia.

My fellow compatriots,

The historic destine of our nation has many times been focuses on the directive of searching wise exits of the most complex situations. We have only succeeded when we pragmatically assessed the current challenges and took appropriate actions. Today we also find ourselves in a similar position. In order to build and consolidate our statehood we, in our collective identity, need to demonstrate adequate thinking and action.

Today, we are trying to put on a normal track the relations with a country where, under the Ottoman rule, our nation fell victim to the policy of patricide and genocide. The scars of the Genocide do not heal. And the memory of our martyrs and future of our generations dictates to have solid and stable state, powerful and prosperous country, a country which is the rebirth of the dreams of the whole Armenian nation. One of the significant steps along that road is having normal relations with all our neighbors, including Turkey.

Independence dictates the will and determination to take responsible decisions; it dictates pragmatism and forward-looking sustained work. That is the road I have selected. I have done it with the strong understanding of the historical reality and a strong belief in the future of our people.

There is no alternative to the establishment of the relations with Turkey without any precondition. It is the dictate of the time. It is not this need that is being debated today. The concern of individuals and some political forces is caused by the different interpretation of certain provisions contained in the Protocols and their historic mistrust towards Turkey.

Having realistically assessed these circumstances and being convinced in the necessity and

correctness of the steps undertaken, I insist on the following:

1. No relations with Turkey can question the reality of the patricide and the genocide perpetrated against the Armenian nation. It is a known fact and it should be recognized and condemned by the whole progressive humanity. The relevant sub-commission to be established under the intergovernmental commission, is not a commission of historians.
2. The issue of the existing border between Armenia and Turkey is to be resolved through prevailing norms of the international law. The Protocols do not go beyond that.
3. These relations cannot and do not relate to the resolution of the Nagorno Karabagh conflict, which is an independent and separate process. Armenia does not regard the clause of the territorial integrity and inviolability of the borders contained in the Protocols as in any way related to the Nagorno Karabagh problem.
4. The Armenian side will give an adequate reaction if Turkey protracts the process of ratification or raises conditions for it. Armenia undertakes no unilateral commitments through these Protocols and does not make any unilateral affirmations. Armenia is signing these Protocols in order to create basis for the establishment of normal relations between our two countries. Hence, if Turkey fails to ratify the Protocols within a reasonable timeframe and does not implement all the clauses contained herein within the provided timeframe or violates them in the future, Armenia will immediately take appropriate steps as stipulated by the international law.

Dear compatriots, in addressing you I want to emphasize that today, more than ever our people should stand united; we should have capability of maturing our collective identity to life in the reality of statehood. That is our road to the future.

The signing of the Protocols will be followed by stages of their ratification and implementation. All the concerns and possible threats which were so widely expressed in the course of the debate will be taken into careful consideration and we shall be able to prevent any development that might contradict our national interest. Today, I am more than convinced that we will succeed. And we will do that together, all of us, the Armenians. Today we are not the same we were only a few months ago. And it is a fact from now on.

I have confidence in the wisdom of our people. I have confidence that together we shall hand down a prosperous and peaceful motherland to our generation. It will definitely be so.

And may God be with us!