# THE MESSAGE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**Ömer Engin LÜTEM**

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The message of President Erdoğan, which was released yesterday on the events of 1915, has, in brief, mentioned that it is a humane responsibility to share and understand the memories of Armenians pains of the First World War, that the events which occurred during this war constituted a shared pain, and that the relocation had inhumane consequences. The Prime minister wished that the Armenians who lost their lives rest in peace and conveyed his condolences to their grandchildren.

Thus, it was the first time in the history of Republic of Turkey that a Prime Minister has showed a humane attitude that understands and shares the pains of Armenians.

Moreover, it is observed that Turkey has preserved its conventional stance towards the Armenian issue. Firstly, despite the expectations of militant Armenians, there is no sign in the message that Turkey has recognized the genocide claims. In addition, the Prime Minister has repeated the calls made in 2005 for setting up of a joint historical commission in order to study the events of 1915 in a scholarly manner, which was refused by the Armenians.

In addition to this, it has been mentioned in the message that either the Diaspora or certain groups in the Diaspora have used some tactics that have prevented the establishment of normal relations between the two countries and the two nations, such as using the events of 1915 as an excuse for hostility against Turkey and turning this issue into a matter of political conflict, deriving enmity from history and creating new antagonisms.

Reactions by Armenia and the Diaspora to the Prime Ministers message are negative. Yet,

the message has not referred, even allusively, to the matters demanded by Armenia from Turkey such as recognition of the genocide allegations, compensation, returning of possessions and, if possible, transfer of some territory from Turkey to Armenia. On the other hand, immediate reactions by the US and the EU are positive. Turkeys humane perspective for the Armenian issue seems to have collected some admiration.

It might cause isolation for Armenia and the Diaspora in the future that they have adopted a different stance than other countries and that they have continued to portray an irreconcilable approach. In this stage, it is possible to state that this message has started a new era for Turkish-Armenian relations.

About the Author :

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Süleyman Nazif Sok. No: 12/B Daire 3-4 06550 Çankaya-ANKARA / TÜRKİYE
**Tel**: +90 (312) 438 50 23-24 • **Fax**: +90 (312) 438 50 26
@avimorgtr
https://www.facebook.com/avrasyaincelemelerimerkezi
**E-Mail**: info@avim.org.tr
http://avim.org.tr

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