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THE WAY OUT TO TURKISH-ARMENIAN RECONCILIATION COULD BE MUTUAL FORGIVENESS

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One of the painful events of our recent history is Armenian citizens in Anatolia being subjected to relocation during the First World War by the administration of that period, many losing their lives under war conditions during this relocation and migration, the main bulk starting a new life in Middle East countries of todays Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan, and again many having to pursue their futures beyond Ottoman state borders.

The justifications of the policy of relocation, conditions of its implementation, the plight of the Turks in Anatolia, the methods used by allied powers during the First World War to cause the Ottoman government to collapse, the concept of nation state developed against the system of nationalities and many more factors are perceived and interpreted differently by the Turkish and Armenian communities, in particular by the Armenian Diaspora. The events that have occured have left irredeemable marks in the historical memories of both communities. Not only do the Turks not accept the Armenian accusations and the Armenians do not accept the crimes the Turks had to endure, but all reject them with vigor and even with hatred.

Turning the issue into political propaganda and making it a campaign of slander and hatred targeting a whole nation and playing numbers game with the injured and victims have caused the problem to become more complicated and have made it impossible to reach a common ground. By ignoring the fact that the account of the life of not even one person killed cannot be rendered and any such sin cannot be exonerated, and acting with the understanding that if the number is increased, so would its legitimacy has brought to a dead lock any reasonable chance of discussion. Furthermore, hopes for reconciliation have reached a dead end as the proposals for the events to be researched and examined by scholars, experts and historians and reaching a mutual understanding through the conclusion they would come up with, have also not been accepted.

However, states and nations, especially if they share a common historical past and are bound to continue their existence as neighbors, there is no other way than to try to seek reconciliation and live together in peace. At the point we find ourselves in today, logic dictates that the road to Turkish-Armenian reconciliation is one of mutual forgiveness.

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