BELGIAN MPS DEFENDING KASPAR KARAMPETIAN

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24 Belgian MPs published a statement against the international arrest warrant asked by the Azerbaijan Authorities for the President of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) Kaspar Karampetian[1]. In this statement theFederation presided by Kasper Karampetian was boasted for its importance and contribution to solve Nagorno Karabakh conflict on the one hand, and the Azerbaijani side was criticized for the aggressiveness on the other. But who is Kaspar Karampetian?

Though Karampetian has important duties in the Armenian Diaspora it is hardly possible to get much information about him. His relations with the separatist government of Nagorno Karabakh, the eagerness on supplying financial assistance to them, the initiatives taken in European capitals for legitimizing the current invaded status of Azerbaijans territories are some known attempts of Kapsar Karampetian although tried to be hidden from the international society. He is known for establishing relations in the European political circles thanks to his business connections for securing support to the illegal regime in Nagorno Karabakh. From his account on social media we became aware of the fact that in the gala held by Karampetian in Brussels he could collect 3, 8 million Euros and sent it to the illegal regime in Karabakh[2]. Furthermore, it is widely known that Karampetian cooperates with the Armenian National Intelligence service and the Federation presided by him is the sub-section of theErivan-centered organization - Armenian Cause Central Council[3]. Karampetian initiated illegal visits of European MPs that he has good relations with Nagorno Karabakh region disregarding the principles of international law.

Azerbaijan Public Prosecutor's Office for Severe Crimes Investigation asked Interpol to include the name of Kaspar Karampetian into the list of wanted people because of deliberate violation of Azerbaijan national borders by visiting Nagorno Karabakh through Armenia between 2014-2018 with overlooking the national and international legislation where he gave statements containing threats against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan Republic.

Azerbaijan Public Prosecutor accused Karampetian for breaching the articles of 281.2 (public appeal against the state) and 318.2 (illegal crossing the border of Azerbaijan in an organized manner) of the Criminal Code and demanded his arrest and be brought before the court.

On the other hand, Karampetian evaluated Azerbaijans action to ask Interpol for the arrest warrant as absurdity. He continued with emphasizing that there is not substantial basis for such kind of initiative taken by Azerbaijan in the international law:

> There are no relevant international legal provisions to prevent any European citizen (be he/she a tourist, a journalist, a politician or public figure) to visit Nagorno Karabakh to get acquainted with the situation on the ground. It is their right to do so. EU representatives should have an unconditional access to Nagorno Karabakh.

In their joint statement Belgian MPs claimed that the international legislation does not prohibit anyone from visiting Nagorno Karabakh, for this reason they argued that the punishment menaced by Azerbaijan is not more than just an attempt to agitate. The MPs stressed the impossibility of solving the Nagorno Karabakh conflict without utilizing the peaceful means. They also emphasized that the attempts of Azerbaijan to isolate the region may ignite the current situation. Consequently, they indicated that this isolationist approach violates the principles of the Universal Declarationof Human Rights, and the opinion of the population living in the region should be taking into consideration with a view to resolving the problem between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Furthermore, in the sentence where the aim of the European Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy (EAFJD) was revealed as an organization using the tools of civic activism to raise awareness seems highly insignificant in evaluating the activities of Karampetian.

Contrary to the insistent statements of Karampetian and Belgian MPs, like other sovereign states Azerbaijan has competence to give or not to give consent to the entry and the exit of people to and from its *de-jure*territories. It would be interesting to find out what the Belgian MPs aim by their defense of Karampetian claiming that international law principles do not provide any basis for the states to take preventive measures with a view to protecting their territorial integrity and sovereignty. The close relations between Karampetian and Belgian MPs give rise to suspicions about the means utilized by the diamond millionaire to form contacts.

The statement Illegal visits to the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh and other surrounding regions of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan Republic states:

> Any visit without the consent of the Republic of Azerbaijan to the above-mentioned territories, which are internationally recognized as an integral part of Azerbaijan is considered as a violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and as a breach of national legislation, as well as relevant norms and principles of international law[4].

Karampetians entry into Nagorno Karabakh, into the Azerbaijans internationally recognized territories without the consent of the Azerbaijan government, and his statements with threats against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan Republic do not violate only the abovementioned articles of the national legislation, but

also disregards the principles of international law. As was indicated in the United Nations (UN) Charter (1945), the Final Act (1975) of Organization of Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE) also emphasizes the territorial integrity of states principle:

> The participating States will likewise refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation or other direct or indirect measures of force in contravention of international law. No such occupation or acquisition will be recognized as legal[5].

Consequently, the illegal visits to Nagorno Karabakh by Karampetian and European MPs, as well as the Armenian invasion of Azerbaijans territories internationally recognized by the UN SC resolutions (822, 853, 874, 884) should be considered blatant violations of the international legislation and the international law for the last thirty years. For this reason, European MPs defending Kaspar Karampetian should take into account that with such kind of action they do not contribute to the solution of Nagorno Karabakh conflict, to the contrary they make it all the more difficult to find a peaceful solution.

[1]"Belgian Deputies Against Azerbaijan's Political Abuse of Interpol." *EAFJD*, Nisan 17, 2018. Accessed May 04, 2018. http://eafjd.eu/declaration.html.

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[3]İbid.

[4]Illegal Visits to Nagorno Karabakh. Accessed May 02, 2018. http://batumi.mfa.gov.az/content/38.

[5]Howard, Michael. "Helsinki Reconsidered." *The Round Table* 67, no. 267 (1977): 241-48. doi:10.1080/00358537708453277.

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