ARMENIA SUSPENDS THE RATIFICATION OF THE PROTOCOLS

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In a statement delivered by the parties forming the government coalition in Armenia, after expressing, in summary, that Turkeys inconsistent and evasive position and the continuous policy of proposing preconditions has led to a stalemate in the process of the ratification within a reasonable timeframe and that the National Assembly of Armenia considers unacceptable that Prime Minister Erdogan makes the ratification of the Protocols directly dependent upon the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh-Azerbaijan conflict, it has been declared that they have considered necessary to suspend that process and remove the discussion of the issue from the agenda of the Republic of Armenias Parliament until the Turkish side is ready to further continue the process without preconditions. In President Sarkisians speech delivered on television on this issue, it has been stated that Turkey is not ready to continue the process to move forward without preconditions, that the reasonable timeframes have elapsed, that Turkeys aim is to pass 24th of April, that Armenia shall retain her signature under the Protocols, that their political objective of normalizing relations between Armenia and Turkey remains valid, but that they have deemed necessary to suspend the procedure of the ratifying the Protocols. In the Armenian Presidents speech, another point which draws attention is expressing his gratitude to President Gül for political correctness, while not mentioning Prime Minister Erdoğan at all. One other interesting point is the President stating that he is grateful to all those Turkish intellectuals that struggle for the restoration of historical justice and share their grief. In summary, Armenia has expressed its commitment to the protocols, while suspending the ratification process. However, it can be seen that this decision has not made any change on the issue of the protocols. As a matter of fact, in response to Turkey not ratifying the protocols until important progress is made within the Karabakh conflict, Armenia has declared that they will not ratify the protocols unless Turkey does. The statements delivered yesterday are only a repetition of this decision. If there has been no change, why has this decision been expressed in such a grand style. The reason for this should be searched within Armenias internal political situation and its relations with the Diaspora. The Protocols signed with Turkey have led to criticisms of the Dashnaks on the one side and the opposition parties on the other, criticisms within the Diaspora being much stronger. However, if the Protocols would be ratified and the Turkish border opened, this would especially be a great success for President Sarkisian. But, as stated before, since Turkey linked the ratification of the protocols to the Karabakh conflict, this did not take place and the Armenian Government and President faced difficulty. The declaration that the ratification process of the protocols has been suspended aims at getting rid of

this difficult situation when possible. On the other hand, in the coalition parties statement and President Sarkisians speech, Turkey and especially Prime Minister Erdoğan has been held responsible for the freezing of the protocols. This is the reason why gratitude to President Gül has been expressed while the Prime Minister has not been mentioned at all. Another purpose of this initiative of Armenia is to effect President Obamas statement which will be delivered on April 24. Under normal conditions, it was expected that in this statement, Turkey and Armenias joint efforts for the normalization of relations would be praised. After the freezing decision of Armenia, it is difficult to remain optimistic about the future of normalization. However, it is still not expected that President Obama will use the word genocide in his speech. On the other hand, it could be expected that Armenia blaming Turkey and holding her responsible for the current situation could increase the Diasporas initiatives which had already been started, to convince parliaments of other countries to adopt resolutions recognizing the genocide allegations. In summary, although this decision of Armenia has not actually created any change for the protocols, it could be seen that this will create tension between the two countries and the process of normalizing relations could be hindered.

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