AVİM Commentary • No: 2024 / 6 • March

A STATUE OF TERRORIST TEHLIRIAN IN MARSEILLE

Hazel ÇAĞAN ELBİR

Analyst

This is the English translation of a Turkish language article that was originally published by AVİM on 11 March 2024.

According to news reports, a statue will be unveiled on March 15th, in the French Beaumont town of Marseille, in honor of the revanchist terrorist of Operation Nemesis, Soghomon Tehlirian[1]. This development raises doubts regarding Frances sincerity towards peace as it seeks to establish a presence in the Caucasus.

As one will recall, Soghomon Tehlirian, one of the terrorists of Operation Nemesis, assassinated Talat Pasha in Berlin on March 15th, 1921. Tehlirian was arrested, but was eventually released by a German court on the grounds of insanity, which was due to a well-coached and fabricated defense[2]. The failure to convict the terrorist Tehlirian was propounded by terrorist organizations as a so-called moral justification[3] for the beginning of the third period of Armenian Terrorism in 1973. This understanding shows that it is inevitable to associate the militant/radical Armenian diaspora with terrorism. Armenian terrorism re-emerged its ugly head in the 1970s and 70 people, including 31 Turkish diplomats, were brutally murdered[4].

Marseille is one of the cities where the Armenian diaspora is active. There is a so-called genocide statue in the center of the city. In the late 1800s, it is known that the perpetrators of several terrorist acts within the Ottoman Empire fled to Marseille on French-flagged ships. Historically, Marseille is one of the most preferred safe havens for Armenian terrorism and propaganda. Another safe haven is undoubtedly Los Angeles, US. There is also a statue of the terrorist Tehlirian in Fresno, California[5].

In our previous articles on Operation Nemesis, we have noted that in addition to attacks against Turks, Operation Nemesis terrorists also attacked Armenians[6]. Harutiun Megerdichian and an Armenian named Vahe Ihsan are two examples. Harutiun Megerdichian was murdered by Soghomon Tehlirian. Vahe Ihsan (Yesayan), who was declared a traitor for reporting groups preparing for uprising and assisting in arrests as a result of the Circular of April 24th, 1915, was killed by Arshavir Shiragian, who died muttering I wish I had killed more[7].

The Operation Nemesis statue that was erected in Yerevan less than a year ago caused a diplomatic crisis and discussions on its removal have been on the agenda. The fact that a new statue initiative is coming from France during such a period indicates that the Armenian diaspora and Armenia are not moving in the same direction. In this dilemma, the French administration seems to favor the Armenian diaspora in France over the Armenian administration. The influence of the Armenian diaspora in France is also demonstrated by the fact that April 24th has been recognized as one of the national days of France.

The provocations of France now include the statue planned to be erected in Marseille, as well as its attempts to arm Armenia. France, which undermines the peace initiatives in the Caucasus with its arms aid to Armenia, clearly demonstrates its support for Armenian terrorism by erecting a statue to the terrorist Tehlirian.

*Photograph: *https://hyetert.org/2018/03/16/soghomon-tehlirian-nemesis-of-march-15-1921/*

[1] Statue Honoring Soghomon Tehlirian to be Inagurated in Marseille, *Alpha News*, alphanews.am, March 7, 2024, https://alphanews.am/en/statue-honoring-soghomon-tehlirian-to-be-inaugurated-in-marseille/.

[2] Christopher Gunn, Cinayetin Cezasız Kalması: Soghomon Tehlirian, ASALA ve Adalet Komandoları, 1921-1984, *Ermeni Araştırmaları*, Terazi Yayıncılık, 2012, Issue: 42, p. 126, https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/download/article-file/639641.

[3] Gunn, p. 127.

[4] Gunn, p. 126.

[5] Gunn, p. 128.

[6] Hazel Çağan Elbir, What Is Operation Nemesis?, *AVİM*, avim.org.tr, May 25th, 2023, https://avim.org.tr/en/Analiz/WHAT-IS-OPERATION-NEMESIS .

[7] Çağan Elbir, *AVİM*.

About the Author :

Hazel Çağan-Elbir is an analyst in AVİM. Çağan-Elbir continues her studies in Political Economy doctorate program at Atılım University.

To cite this article: ELBİR, Hazel ÇAĞAN. 2026. "A STATUE OF TERRORIST TEHLIRIAN IN MARSEILLE." Center For Eurasian Studies (AVİM), Commentary No.2024 / 6. March 15. Accessed November 10, 2026. https://mail.avim.org.tr/en/Yorum/A-STATUE-OF-TERRORIST-TEHLIRIAN-IN-MARSEILLE

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

© 2009-2025 Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM) All Rights Reserved