



**ALLAMEH TABATABAEE UNIVERSITY  
ECO COLLEGE OF INSURANCE**

**Area Studies Department  
M.A Degree Dissertation**

**From Historical Facts to Geo-Political Realities: Relation between  
Turkey and Armenia ( 1915 – 2010)**

By:  
**Mariam Shafa**

Supervisor:  
**Dr. Abdul Reza Faraji Rad**

Advisor:  
**Dr. Atousa Goudarzi**

**December 2010**

*In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

## Acknowledgement

I would like to express my honestly gratitude to Dr. Abdul Reza Faraji Rad, for his supervision and for his special role and encouragement during this work. I also feel indebted to Dr. Atousa Goudarzi, Dean of the Faculty of ECO of Allameh Tabatabaie University, for giving me valuable advises for completion of this work. Also I would like to extend my special thanks to Dr. Syed Ali Mahmoudi, who agreed to serve as Head of the jury during my defense and also for his guidance and encouragement which culminated in this thesis.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my deepest gratitude to my father Ali Shafa and mother Fatima Shafa, for their understanding, patience and support during the entire period of my study.

Last but not the least I am grateful for the kind cooperation of the staff and management of the ECO College of Insurance throughout my study and research.

# Abstract

*Armenians are a nation with its exclusive individual and historical characteristics. Armenia does not have a very long history as an independent state with government. we are trying to realize the relations between this country and turkey.we have undertaken extensive efforts to highlight various perspectives and describe several factors for the absence of diplomatic ties between Armenia and Turkey. On the other hand, efforts are exerted to discuss the process of normalization of relations between the two neighbors. Among the most significant and noteworthy discussions is the issue of genocide which goes back to 1915. The Armenian have long struggled to pursue the international community for formally recognition of the genocide of Armenian at the hand of the Ottoman Empire. This is while Turkey acknowledges the sufferings and hardships faced by Armenians during the World War 1 but remains at odd with Armenia over the depth of the crises. The issue of genocide is main obstacle to the normalization of ties between the two countries.*

*Among other unresolved regional hurdles is the issue of Karabakh, which lies at the heart of dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over land and identity. As given close religious and communal ties between turkey with Azeri people, it has made for Ankara impossible to remain impartial in this conflict. Ultimately, Ankara has constantly thrown its full weight behind Azerbaijan.*

*In addition to that, the two countries have also conflicts disputes over the borders and this has led to complete closure of borders between the two countries. As a result, the political, trade and commerce ties have remained cut off between the two.*

*One Another aspects of the process of normalization of relations between the two nations has had some non-political aspects which include formation of a council for expansion of trade, a commission for peace and reconciliation, and regional efforts for enhancement of the mutual ties.*

*The truce and normalization of ties between Turkey and Armenia can also convert the hostile ties between Baku and Yerevan to amicable ones. As Tehran has established very strong bonds with Turkey and Armenia, this all can contribute in achieving regional reconciliation and integration.*

*Normalization process is like a tool to expand regional development project. Normalization process will facilitate the transportation and investment projects among the regional countries and ultimately will bring economic prosperity across the region.*

# Table of Contents

## **CHAPTER ONE: Introduction**

Description of problem	8
Key Question	11
Main Hypothese	11
Key Terms	11
The significance of research	11
Methodology	12
Chapter outline and classification	12
Sources	13

## **CHAPTER TWO: Impediment for the normalization of Armenia – Turkey Relations**

Genocide of 1915	15
karabakh Conflict	25
Genocide	44

## **CHAPTER THREE: Different attempts to normalization**

Introduction	50
Political and diplomatic attempts	53
Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission (TARC)	62
Economic relations and attempts to normalization	65
Social attempts to normalize the relations between the two countries	68
Turkish-Armenia Business Development Council (TABDC)	70

**CHAPTER FOUR: Effect of Reconciliation over Iran, Armenia and Turkey in the region**

Reconciliation and Armenia situation in the region 73

Trade, Infrastructure and Investment 74

Societal and Political Development and Cooperation 77

Turkey’s costs and potential benefits 78

Turkey as a transport hub 79

Reconciliation and the situation of Iran in the region 81

  

**Conclusion** 85

  

**Bibliography** 99

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### Description of problem

The Caucasus is geographically bounded by Russia's Krasnodar and Stavropol districts in the north, the Araxes River and Iranian and Turkish boundaries in the south, and the Black and Caspian Seas. It is conventionally divided into two parts separated by the Caucasus mountain chain. The Northern Caucasus subregion is one of the seven large Russian federal regions crafted by Vladimir Putin, and includes the seven federal entities of Dagestan, Chechnya, Ingushetia, Northern Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachai-Cherkessia, and Adygea. The Southern Caucasus includes the new independent states of Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. These two subregions are distinct but also linked by historical experience, ethnic commonality, cultural and linguistic traits, and strategic dynamics. The Caucasus meets Buzan's criteria for designation as a security complex.<sup>1</sup>

The South Caucasus is a geopolitical region located on the border of Eastern Europe and Southwest Asia. Also referred to as Transcaucasia, or The Transcaucasia. More

---

<sup>1</sup> Boulder: L. Rienner and Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 419- 423



specifically, the South Caucasus area spans the southern portion of the Caucasus Mountains and its lowlands, lying between the two continents of Europe and Asia and extending from the southern part of the Greater Caucasus Mountain range of southwestern Russia and going southerly to the Turkish and Armenian borders, travelling between the Black and Caspian Seas. The area includes the southern part of the Greater Caucasus Mountain range, the entire Lesser Caucasus Mountain range, the Colchis Lowlands and Kura-Aras Lowlands, the Talysh Mountains, the Lenkoran Lowlands, Javakheti and the Armenian highlands. The Transcaucasia, or South Caucasus area, is a part of the entire Caucasus geographical region that essentially divides the Eurasian transcontinental into two<sup>2</sup>

Armenians are a nation with its exclusive individual and historical characteristics. This nation with long history and background can be classified neither as Eastern nor as the Western. However, Armenia does not have a very long history as an independent state with government. I try to realize the relations between this country and Turkey.

In this research paper, on one hand, I have undertaken extensive efforts to highlight various perspectives and describe several factors for the absence of diplomatic ties between Armenia and Turkey. On the other hand, efforts are exerted to discuss the process of normalization of relations between the two neighbors.

Among the most significant and noteworthy discussions is the issue of genocide which goes back to 1915. The Armenian have long struggled to pursue the international community for formally recognition of the genocide of Armenian at the hand of the *Ottoman Empire*. This is while Turkey acknowledges the sufferings and hardships faced by Armenians during the World War 1 but remains at odd with

---

<sup>2</sup> [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South\\_Caucasus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Caucasus)

Armenia over the depth of the crises. The issue of genocide is the main obstacle to the normalization of ties between the two countries.

Among other unresolved regional hurdles is the issue of Karabakh, which lies at the heart of dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over land and identity. As given close religious and communal ties between Turkey with Azeri people, it has made for Ankara impossible to remain impartial in this conflict. Ultimately, Ankara has constantly thrown its full weight behind Azerbaijan.

The process of normalization of relations has various perspectives, but political and diplomatic aspects are of most significance

In addition to that, the two countries have also conflicts disputes over the borders and this has led to complete closure of borders between the two countries. As a result, the political, trade and commerce ties have remained cut off between the two neighbors.

Armenia is a small country, which has no access to Mediterranean Sea, and this will likely highlight the need for Armenia to normalize its relations with Turkey and other regional countries.

The process of normalization of relations has various perspectives, but political and diplomatic aspects are of most significance. September 2008, visit by Turkish President Abdullah Gul to Armenia in a bid to attend a football match between the two countries' teams has played significant role in improvement of relations between the two neighbors. This was highlighted in media-outlets as soccer diplomacy.

Another aspects of the process of normalization of relations between the two nations has had some non-political aspects which include formation of a council for

expansion of trade, a commission for peace and reconciliation, and regional efforts for enhancement of the mutual ties.

### **Key Question:**

- After the independency of Armenia, what were those main factors which had imposed a negative impact over the relation of Armenia and Turkey?

### **Main Hypotheses:**

- It seems that Armenian–Turkish relations have been strained by Historical and Geo-political issues

### **Key Terms:**

- Armenia foreign Policy, Turkey, Genocide, Historical and Geo-political issues

### **The significance of research**

It is very important to diagnose the root-causes of absence of ties between the two nations, because the both countries are neighbors to Iran. This underlines high significance of the topic and the accurate case study would help Tehran officials to adopt accurate foreign policy in the given circumstances.

Iran can also play very positive and significant role in the process of normalization as well. Armenia has had very close ties with Iran and has been dependent of Tehran due to its border dispute with Turkey and Azerbaijan. Now Iran has also maintained

good diplomatic relations with the Ankara government as well. These new strategic opportunities can lay the foundations for new dialogue in the strategically important region.

### **The significance of research from other perspectives**

- **The normalization process, an overture to regional stability**

It is widely expected that the process of normalization between Ankara and Yerevan can resolve their border disputes and would also facilitate the solution to the issue of *Nagorno-Karabakh* in the South Caucasus. That could ultimately stabilize the whole troubled region.

- **Normalization process as a prelude to regional reconciliation.**

The truce and normalization of ties between Turkey and Armenia can also convert the hostile ties between Baku and Yerevan to amicable ones. As Tehran has established very strong bonds with Turkey and Armenia, this all can contribute in achieving regional reconciliation and integration.

Normalization process is like a tool to expand regional development project. Normalization process will facilitate the transportation and investment projects among the regional countries and ultimately will bring economic prosperity across the region.

### **1. Methodology**

I adopted descriptive method to compile this dissertation. I have focused on describing the root-causes for absence of relations between the two nations and the recent ongoing normalization process. The researcher has collected most of the data

from library sources; however, the method of correlation issue has also been drafted in to enrich the contents. According to research, the absence of relations between the two nations are deeply interconnected with historical differences and ethnic conflicts.

## **2. Chapter outline and classification**

This dissertation is outlines in four chapters. The first chapter is a preface to the topic while the second focuses on the reasons of absence of ties between the two nations. The second chapter includes three discussions which are as follow:

- 1)The allegations of persecution and genocide that go back to 1915
- 2) The crisis of the *Nagorno-Karabakh*
- 3) The border disputes

The third chapter includes the discussions regarding the normalization process between Turkey and Armenia. In the very beginning, I have discussed the ongoing extensive political and diplomatic efforts, then the efforts undertaken by the regional council of trade and the reconciliation commission.

The last chapter is allocated to conclusion and a focus on Iran's contribution to normalization process.

## **3. Sources and bibliography**

Iranian libraries are not too rich in books and sources regarding these topics. Moreover, no significant sources were available about the normalization process because the topic is quite new. However, I had access to a great number of internet sources in abundance.

1) Sources about the absence of ties between the two countries, genocide, border dispute and the *Nagorno-Karabakh* issue:

- Croissant, Michael P. “The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and”
- Görgülü, aybars “ The Turkey-Armenia Relations: A Vicious Circle”
- Hovannisian, Richard “The Armenian genocide: cultural and ethical”

2) The sources on the normalization process:

- Radzyner, Alice “Armenia And Turkey: Walking up The Stairway to Normalization”
- Ferhat Kentel & Gevorg Poghosyan “ Armenian-Turkish Citizens’ Mutual Perceptions and Dialogue Project”
- Goshgarian, Rachel “ Breaking the Stalemate: Turkey-Armenia Relations in the 21<sup>st</sup> century”.

# CHAPTER ONE

## Impediment for the normalization of Armenia – Turkey Relations

### PART ONE

#### Genocide

#### Historical background

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when obligatory immigration and execution of Armenian took place by Ottomanian Turks, caused common perception to be formed from this event by Armenian. With regard to Armenia, before the birth & formation, the concept of segregation and independency was in their mind under amendment in 1861, and with deliberately purpose of weakening Armenian, states were divided into provinces. The political and economical deterioration of the Ottoman Empire was paralleled by an Armenian cultural reawakening.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Hovannisian, Richard *"The Republic of Armenia, Volume I: The First. Year, 1918-1919Y"*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972,p.9

The universalist definition of genocide by Raphael Lemkin, who pioneered the concept seems to me perfectly acceptable “A coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of the national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves”.<sup>4</sup> About Armenia genocide it is essential to mention that before the “Genocide of 1915”, more than 2 million Armenians lived in Turkey.<sup>5</sup> The large extent, the escalation of the massacres of the 1980s into the genocide of 1915 is accepted by almost all serious scholars.<sup>6</sup>

In 1894-1896, about 300,000 Armenians were massacred during the reign of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul-Hamid II. In 1909, about 30,000 Armenians were massacred in Cilicia; Armenian villages and city quarters looted and burned.

In 1915-1923, about 1,500,000 Armenians perished, and 500,000 survivors were forcibly exiled from their ancestral homes in Ottoman Turkey.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1914, the Ottoman army mobilized. Like their fellow Turkish citizens, all able-bodied Armenian men, with few exceptions, were called up for military service. At the beginning of February 1915, the Armenians in the armed forces were segregated into labor battalions, disarmed, and ultimately worked to death or massacred.

---

<sup>4</sup> Melson, Robert “*Revolution and Genocide: on the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust*”; University of Chicago University Press. 1992, p.11

<sup>5</sup> Touryan, Miller Lorna “*Survivors: an oral history of the Armenian genocide*”, University of California Press, 1993, p.4

<sup>6</sup> Hovannisian, Richard “*The Armenian genocide: cultural and ethical legacies*; New Brunswick, New Jersey” 1993, p.5



On August 1914, the Young Turk government began to release murderers and other convicted criminals from prisons throughout Asia Minor to be enrolled in the so-called “Special Organization” of the Ottoman Security Service for the express purpose of annihilating the Armenians. Entire villages in the eastern provinces were eradicated in the fall and winter of 1914-1915.

In April 1915, Ottoman forces disarmed the Armenian civilian population in southern Turkey, and deported them to the Salt Desert in Central Turkey. It also began deportations to the Syrian Desert in the distant south. Packed into boxcars, or forced to walk, often without food or water for weeks, tens of thousands quickly perished. Deportations and massacres soon became the plight of Armenians in other areas as well.

On April 24, 1915 about 200 Armenian religious, political, and intellectual leaders were arrested in the capital, Istanbul, taken to remote locations and murdered. Similar measures to liquidate the religious and secular leadership of the Armenian communities were implemented throughout the empire in all Armenian centers.

On May 27, 1915 a Deportation Edict was formally promulgated. Soon afterwards, Armenians throughout the Ottoman Empire were deported on short notice. Adult males were usually separated from the group and massacred. The remaining women, children and elderly were marched across Armenia to the Syrian Desert. Thousands were kidnapped. Most of the deportees were massacred by brigands and the Special Organization, or died of starvation, disease or exposure.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> [www.aaainc.org](http://www.aaainc.org)

## **Turkish view towards massacre of 1915**

The official Turkish reaction to all these resolutions has been defensive. A historical Conference on the Armenian issue is a case in point. It was cancelled a day before it was scheduled to take place on May 2005, at Istanbul's Bogaziçi University. The conference, "Ottoman Armenians during the Decline of the Empire: Issues of Scientific Responsibility and Democracy," was organized by historians from three of Turkey's leading universities, Bogaziçi, Istanbul Bilgi, and Sabancı. The organizers said the conference would have been the first in Turkey on the Armenian question not set up by state authorities or government affiliated historians. Government officials had pressured the organizers, first to include participants of the government's choosing, then to cancel the event. The Turkish Minister of Justice, Cemil Uçuk, even considered the conference 'a dagger in the back of the Turkish people' and said it amounted to 'treason'.<sup>8</sup>

Turkey's position against genocide allegations is that the experiences in the past were a great tragedy and both parties suffered heavy casualties, but that it is impossible to define these incidents as genocide. The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which is referred to within this context, was put into force in 1951, and does not have an explicit provision regarding retroactive applicability. The Armenian side claims that it is necessary to apply the Convention on Genocide retroactively since there is no statute of limitations for genocide crimes.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup><http://www.umich.edu/~iinet/iisite/media/05-27-05-CHE-Gocek.htm>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/yazdir/?t=25.07.2007&c=12&i=37302>.

## **Genocide and Armenia foreign relations with Turkey**

As mentioned earlier, Genocide allegations play a role in directing the course of Turkey-Armenia relations. For instance, the European Parliament (EP) recognized the Armenian genocide on 18<sup>th</sup> June 1987. Thereupon, it requested that the European Commission accept the recognition of this genocide by Turkey as a precondition for EU membership. Nevertheless, the EP explicitly expressed that one could never expect the Republic of Turkey to be found responsible for an event carried out by the Ottoman Empire, and so give legal or monetary reparations. The EP's standing towards the Armenian question has changed in recent years and the EP appreciated the Turkish Government's call for establishing a joint commission to investigate the details pertaining to the genocide allegations. While accepting that recognizing the Armenian genocide is not one of the Copenhagen criteria, the EP argues that Turkey should face its past.<sup>10</sup>

Shireen hunter in his article "The Evolution of the Foreign Policy of the Transcaucasia" explains the historical experiences (1915) as an important and effective factors over the Armenia's foreign policy, and by the religious' point of view considers this country as an isolated nation. Country of Armenia is not only an isolated country in land but also from religious point of view is considered as an isolated, as it is a Christian nation between the Muslim states such as Iran, Azerbaijan and Turkey.

By considering the case of "Armenian Genocide", in this article Hanter mentions the victims' number almost one million people. Historical tragedy which has isolated Armenia, cause this country not to have any diplomatic relationship with its

---

<sup>10</sup> *Görgülü, op.cit, p.20*

neighboring country "Turkey" and other neighboring country "Azerbaijan" which let them remained in a conflicting position. Armenian's isolation took dramatic formation when they started feeling that they were left alone from the west countries.

The problem of the Genocide must be put in the first place in the list of contradictions, in our opinion. The problem is that Turkey officially rejects the fact of the Armenian Genocide in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire, while Armenia obtains for its recognition and condemnation not only by Turkey, but also by the whole world community. This problem is connected with the deepest stratum of collective memory and identity of the Armenian people and is perceived as a struggle for restoration of justice. While in Turkey, the state in the sphere of "official history" (resmi tarih) has tabooed this topic during the whole period of the country's existence. As a result, majority of the country's population fully share the government's position in the issue. In 2000, the National Security Council of Turkey, factually, the highest authority in determination of the strategic priorities of the foreign and domestic policy of the country, considers it among those issues that touch the national interests of the country. Turkey permanently and rather insistently demands that Armenia refuses from the policy aiming recondition and condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, which the latter decisively rejects. At the same time, official Yerevan is for normalization of relations without any preliminary conditions.<sup>11</sup> Having been adopted by the Armenian parliament, the declaration of independence of Armenia, dated 1992, stipulates that the

---

<sup>11</sup> Safrastyan, Ruben "Armenian-Turkish Relations: From Interstate Dispute to Neighborliness", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 25 July 2008 ,p.5  
<http://www.armeniaforeignministry.com/htms/doi.html>.