

[redacted]

Thanks for this useful report which underlines that while the Armenian issue is gaining profile in Turkey it is still a marginal issue. Is that the right conclusion?

I have been struck by the number of civic activists here have remarked on the fact that commemorations are now being held in Turkey and that this is a positive sign of a growing debate. I have also been struck by the number of interlocutors here who have mentioned the Kurdish factor.

[redacted]

Jonathan

From: [redacted]

Sent: 26 April 2013 15:15

To: Jonathan Aves

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: Armenia Commemoration - Turkey perspective

All

[redacted] has been monitoring the Turkish speaking press coverage around the 24 April anniversary. Some of the newspapers covered the news stories of the demonstrations in Armenia, Greece and Lebanon where Turkish flags were stepped on and burnt. But the majority of the Turkish speaking coverage seems to have focused on the US angle – in particular Obama’s speech where, once again, he did not mention the ‘g’ word. [redacted]

Some commentaries from the Turkish press criticise the Armenian side - giving examples showing that the Armenians have faults and they committed crimes in that historical period and underlines that these information are excluded from the books in the western libraries. One commentary also accuses the British for provoking the mutual massacres depending on the speech of Kacaznuni in Tashnak Party Congress in 1923 in Bucharest.

However the English speaking Turkish press also covered the issue, two reports outlined the foreign delegation visit (of which we were made aware separately), consisting of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), representatives working against racism and members of the Armenian diaspora who attended a commemoration event on 24 April. A further report stated that Israel is reported to also be discussing the ‘g’ word in Parliamentary session (at the same time as Israeli’s visited Ankara to discuss compensation for the victims of the Mavi Marmar incident in 2010) but the delegate is reported to have made clear this was not an accusation at Turkey or at the current Turkish government today. An interesting political twist was introduced with the BDP party (Peace and Democracy Party) lamented the mass killings of Ottoman Armenians , going as far to label it as genocide and demanded a parliamentary panel to investigate the incidents.

Other reports were mainly in commentary form, and took more of a balanced approach. One commemorated Hrant Dinc, one asked whether the current Kurdish peace initiative would also affect a Turkish apology in 2015, one is hopeful that Turkey has a strategy (not just counter-offensive) on 2015 to encourage normalised relations with Armenia (especially along trade lines) – at the same time being cogniscent of at the same time ensuring Azerbaijan was on side – one even raised the question of the Georgian Armenians.

Comment: The coverage seems to have majored more heavily in the English speaking press. This in itself comes as no real surprise. But in comparison to last year I would suggest that there was more coverage overall than in 2011. [redacted]