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**Armenian National Committee of America**

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide  
From: Kate Nahapetian, Government Affairs Director  
Date: February 7, 2007

**RE: Armenian Foreign Minister Condemns Turkey's Silencing of Armenians**

Below are excerpts of an OpEd from today's *Los Angeles Times* by Armenia's Foreign Minister.

Commenting on the assassination of Hrant Dink, the Turkish-Armenian editor who was prosecuted numerous times and subsequently gunned down in Istanbul because of his writings on the Armenian Genocide, Minister Oskanian writes that Turkey should stop using its anti-free speech laws and blockade to try to punish Armenians for discussing the Armenian Genocide:

[ . . . ] In the days immediately following Dink's shocking death . . . we in Armenia and others around the world wanted to believe that the outpouring of public grief would create a crack in the Turkish wall of denial and rejection, and that efforts would be made to chip away at the conditions that made the assassination possible. . . . However, after those initial hints at conciliation, the message out of Ankara has already changed. Last week, according to the Turkish media, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan said there can be no rapprochement with Armenians because Armenians still insist on talking about the genocide.

[ . . . ] Unfortunately, Turkey's policy of keeping the Armenian-Turkish border closed has resulted in a reinforcement of animosities. . . . Turkey insists on maintaining the last closed border in Europe as a tool to exert pressure on Armenia. . . . to punish Armenians for defending their rights and not renouncing their past. Armenia, on the other hand, has no preconditions to normalizing relations. . . . This hermetically closed border combined with a law that prevents Turkey from exploring its own history and memory (by criminalizing truth-seekers such as Dink) have created a world in which Turks can't know their past and can't forge their future.

For the full article or for any more information contact me at [kate@anca.org](mailto:kate@anca.org) or (202) 775-1918.

ANCA NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS  
1711 N Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20036  
ph: 202 775 1918, fx: 202 775 5648  
[www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org), [anca@anca.org](mailto:anca@anca.org)

ANCA WESTERN REGION  
104 N Belmont Street, 2nd Floor  
Glendale, CA 91204  
ph: 818 500 1918, fx: 818 246 7353  
[www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org), [ancawr@anca.org](mailto:ancawr@anca.org)

ANCA EASTERN REGION  
6923 47th Avenue  
Woodside, NY 11377  
ph: 917 428 1918, fx: 718 651 3637  
[www.anca.org](http://www.anca.org), [ancaer@anca.org](mailto:ancaer@anca.org)