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PRESS RELEASE

The Swiss Federal Court condemns a denial of the Armenian Genocide

The Swiss-Armenian Association has learnt with great satisfaction of the Federal Court's ruling published today that the President of the Party of Turkish Workers, Dogu Perinçek, has been condemned as guilty of racial discrimination (article 261bis of the Penal code). Dogu Perinçek had repeatedly asserted in 2005 that the genocide of Armenians in 1915 - during which about 1.5 million Armenians were killed - is an "international lie". Dogu Perinçek has been definitively condemned with a conditional fine, a fine and has been ordered to pay all expenses related to the legal procedure. The Federal Court brings with this judgment, which constitutes precedence, a lot of clarity and consequently a world première regarding legal recognition of the Armenian genocide.

With this decision Switzerland's highest legal authority, leaves no doubt as to the fact that the events of 1915 correspond well and truly to genocide (as has previously been decided at the Police Court and the Court of Cassation of the Canton of Vaud), as related to the agreement of the UN of 1948 defining the crime of genocide.

It appears that this is the first time globally that a supreme court of criminal law has pronounced a condemnation for denial of the Armenian genocide. Swiss justice has thus demonstrated its independence; it notably did not allow to pressure exerted by Turkey to influence its decision. Thus, the Federal Court is contributing to the prevention of genocide and other crimes against humanity by preventing the reproduction of contemptuous behaviour and by guaranteeing justice and respect for human dignity. The Federal Court considers that the negation of the genocide of Armenians constitutes a threat to the identity of the Armenian people. The Federal Court has also asserted that the condemnation of Dogu Perinçek contributes to the protection of human dignity amongst the Armenian community, the dignity which identifies itself with respect for the memory of the genocide of 1915.

With its decision, the Federal Court also sends a signal to other countries inviting them to develop national legislation so that the denial of all genocides, including the genocide of the Armenian people, is penally condemned.

The judgment of 12th December 2007 - a memorable date since it coincides with the day that the Federal Councillor Christophe Blocher was dismissed - also shows that the article of law on the prevention of racism, which is so frequently attacked, in fact presents the justice with no difficulty in application. On the contrary it is a useful and precious tool. Therefore, the attempted revision of the measure against racial discrimination which was introduced by the head of the Federal Department of Justice and Police (in his position only for a few more days), is revealed to be quite useless.

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