



Please deliver to:
**Foreign Affairs
Legislative Aide**

Armenian National Committee of America
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

To: Foreign Affairs Legislative Aide
From: Aram Hamparian, Executive Director
Date: February 18, 2009

RE: Turkey and Sudan

I am writing to alert to you the troubling relationship that is emerging between Turkey and Sudan, two nations with a record of genocide and genocide denial.

This “axis of genocide” has been defined, in large part, by Turkey’s efforts to undermine the international community’s efforts to isolate Sudan’s genocidal regime, through:

- **Turkey’s sale of lethal weaponry directly to Sudan.**
- **Turkish diplomatic support for the Sudanese government’s genocide denials.**
- **Turkey’s use of its UN Security Council seat to block anti-genocide efforts.**

Speaking on the floor of the House on February 13th, Congressman Frank Pallone criticized Turkey for not standing up against, or even recognizing, the Darfur Genocide, noting that Ankara, rather than isolating Sudan, is actually strengthening its bilateral ties:

“Last year, Turkish President Abdullah Gul warmly welcomed Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to Ankara. Yet, Al-Bashir continues to preside over a genocidal regime responsible for the deaths of 300,000 Sudanese people in the Darfur region of the country. Today, 2.7 million Darfuris have lost their homes since the conflict and now live in internally displaced persons camps.”

Representative Pallone added that, “President Gul greeted the Sudanese leader with a military guard of honor only bestowed on Turkey’s closest allies. While the international community fiercely works to contain al-Bashir’s government, Turkey embraces it.”

In a compelling commentary published last January about Sudanese President Al Bashir's warm welcome during a trip to Ankara, (Bashir in Turkey: The Unanswered Questions, The Century Foundation), former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey **Morton Abramowitz**, traditionally a reliable surrogate for Turkey's interests in Washington, wrote:

“One would think Turkey's leaders would be a little more careful before laying down the red carpet for the likes of President Omar al Bashir of Sudan.” He added that, “Turkey has been trying to persuade the world, not very successfully, that there was no Armenian genocide in 1915. The picture of President Abdullah Gül smiling at a joint press conference is hardly going to convince skeptics that Turkey even knows what genocide means, and it will certainly raise doubts in supporters of Turkey.”

Additional points along the Axis of Genocide include:

- Sudan and Turkey have signed a memorandum of understanding to strengthen military relations and are discussing cooperation on military technology transfers and training.
- Turkey's Minister of Trade projects that Sudan will soon be Turkey's largest trading partner in Africa.
- Sudan President al-Bashir's first foreign visit after his indictment by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on crimes of genocide was to Turkey.
- Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan has vocally denied a genocide in Darfur.
- Despite calls from human rights groups, Turkish President Gul has not put pressure on Sudan to end the atrocities in Darfur, but instead claims that hundreds of thousands of deaths are merely a “humanitarian tragedy.”



Sudanese President al-Bashir and Turkish President Gul.

Turkey and Sudan: Comparative Genocide Denial

Turkey	Sudan
<p>Our culture does not allow genocide</p>	
<p>Recep Tayyip Erdogan (National Press Club, 11/5/07): "In fact, our values do not allow our people to commit genocide. It does not allow it and there is no such thing as a genocide."</p>	<p>Al-Bashir (MSNBC interview, 3/19/07): "Villages were burned, and people were killed, but it is not in the Sudanese culture or people of Darfur to rape. It doesn't exist. We don't have it."</p>
<p>The victims rebelled/foreign powers are to blame</p>	
<p>Recep Tayyip Erdogan (National Press Club, 11/5/07): "This was about the time when there was rebellion in different parts of the empire. But given the context of the time and the events that took place at that time, there was provocation by some other countries and the Armenians became part of the rebellion in those years."</p>	<p>Al-Bashir (Asharq Alawsat Interview, 2/17/07): "There is a rebellion problem in Darfur, and it is the duty of a government in any state to fight the rebellion. When war takes place, civilian victims fall, and this has been exaggerated."</p> <p>Al-Bashir (Reuters, 1/22/08) "The people who really commit murders in Darfur are receiving help from Europe and others."</p>
<p>It's deportation and war, not genocide</p>	
<p>Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Prime Minister of Turkey (National Press Club, 11/5/07): "I'll tell you something now. There is no [Armenian] genocide here. What took place was called deportation. Because that was a very difficult time. It was the time of war, in 1915."</p>	<p>Omar al-Bashir, President of Sudan (MSNBC interview with Ann Curry, 3/19/07): "The geographic displacement of people that took place in Darfur is due to the fight in Darfur. The citizen has to move out of the fighting areas to a place of security, seeking peace and security. . . yes, people were killed but not as much - it's a war!"</p>