



SC SESSIONS



President Serzh Sargsyan convenes National Security Council meeting

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On the 1-st march of 2018 President of the Republic of Armenia, President of the National Security Council Serzh Sargsyan convened a meeting of Armenia's National Security Council.

Before proceeding to the agenda, the President congratulated Gagik Harutyunyan on being elected to the position of a member of the Supreme Judicial Council with broad agreement in the National Assembly. The President wished that jointly with other members of the Judicial Council, he could implement the Council's chief mission, namely to ensure the independence of courts and judges.

A key item on the agenda was the discussion of the Armenian-Turkish protocols signed in Zurich in October 2009, which was reported on by Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian. In his brief opening remarks, President Sargsyan touched upon the process of settling Armenia-Turkey relations, initiated by the President of Armenia based on his vision of fostering a safe and harmonious future in the region without any preconditions, and the developments that followed.

Serzh Sargsyan specifically presented Armenia's efforts to promote the process of interstate relations after the signing of the Zurich protocols, and instead, Turkey's non-constructive stance, namely the lack of positive developments in the implementation of those commitments assumed before the international community.

Serzh Sargsyan reminded that Armenia had repeatedly stated that if Turkey did not give up its destructive policy, the Zurich protocols would be declared null and void before the

spring of 2018.

“Dear Colleagues,

You may remember that having your consent, when I initiated the process of normalizing relations between Armenia and Turkey without preconditions, I was guided by a vision of building a safer and harmonious future in the region. Armenia did its best in order not to leave the burden of settling Armenia-Turkey interstate relations to future generations.

We wanted to complete the process and save them the trouble of shouldering that burden.

However, during the past nine years after the signing of the protocols, back to its ill-grounded preconditions, Ankara failed to take any steps to ratify them; moreover, they left no room for a hope that they were going to do so.

At the September, 2017 UN General Assembly meeting, I announced that if Turkey did not take any positive steps toward ratifying the protocols and implementing its commitments, Armenia would call off the Zurich Protocols before the spring of 2018.

The time has come to make a decision. We have just come together to discuss that very issue, and now I give the floor to the Minister of Foreign Relations who will elaborate on the matter,” President Serzh Sargsyan said, adding that by initiating the process, Armenia realized that the initiative would not be accepted unanimously in the Armenian world, especially as regards our compatriots from the Diaspora, most of whom are descendants of Genocide survivors. Nevertheless, our country took that step.

After the Foreign Minister’s report, the members of the Security Council presented their position on the issue, noting that neighboring Turkey did not use the historic opportunity. Moreover, apart from undermining the settlement of relations between Armenia and Turkey, the preconditions it set forth led to obvious complications in the talks for peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as they stiffened Azerbaijan’s position.

The NSC members emphasized that under these conditions, Armenia cannot see an alternative to stopping the protocol signing procedures.

They also pointed out that Armenia had more reasons to set preconditions to Turkey, but it opted for the prospect of having a peaceful and stable region with its neighbors.

As a result of the discussion, the Security Council endorsed the decision to terminate the process of ratifying the protocols “On Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey” and “On Development of Relations between the Republic of Armenia and the Republic of Turkey,” which were signed on October 10, 2009

Summing up the meeting, the President once again stressed that Turkey violated the internationally recognized practice and the commitments that States assume before the international community by overtly refusing to ratify the protocols and setting preconditions that had nothing to do with the protocols themselves.

“I want to repeat once again that we have not set preconditions in our relations with third parties, and will not let anyone use the practice of preconditions.

We are a small country, we do not have a powerful military or economic potential, but we are an independent nation and will only act for the sake of our State and our people.

Taking into account the opinion of the National Security Council, I will sign today a decree on terminating the procedure of ratification of the above-mentioned protocols. I ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs to notify the Turkish side of our decision. After that, the Republic of Armenia will no longer have any legal obligation arising from the signing of those protocols,” President Serzh Sargsyan declared, noting that with a letter stating Armenia’s position on this issue he had notified all parties present at the signing

ceremony, in particular, the Presidents of Russia, France, the USA and the Swiss Confederation, the President of the Council of the European Union and the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, expressing profound gratitude to them and all those international organizations that have supported us in this initiative.

“I want to highlight two important things. The first is that to my strong belief the path we passed was very useful. When we started the negotiation process, we naturally predicted two outcomes - positive or negative. And we came to the conclusion that we are winners in both cases. The successful completion of the process stemmed from the two peoples’ interests, while the failure might convince the international community that the reason behind the lack of relations should be sought elsewhere, at least not in Armenia’s working style. And I think that we have secured it completely.

There is no such international structure, no State involved in international processes that abides by other view. Many times we could hear about who was to serve the ball and why the protocols failed to be ratified. Secondly, as I stated above, our principled position remains unchanged, we are deeply convinced that the establishment and development of relations between Armenia and Turkey stems from the interests of our two peoples. Interest is important indeed, but we should not always run after that without the hope that we can achieve it anyway: we can lose a lot during that time. Therefore, we are ready to establish relations with Turkey, if there is such awareness on the Turkish side. If we get proposals tomorrow, or the next day, we will be ready to discuss them, but before that we will try to develop as we were developing until now without having diplomatic relations with Turkey,” the President of Armenia underscored.



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Address - Yerevan, Armenia,

Marshal Baghramyan avenue 24

Անվտանգության խորհրդի գրասենյակ, 0019

seco@gov.am

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