

**The letter President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan sent to General Vicar of the
Armenian Patriarch of Turkey, Reverend Aram Ateşyan**

“Reverend Aram Ateşyan,

General Vicar of the Armenian Patriarch of Turkey,

My distinguished Armenian citizens,

I salute you wholeheartedly.

Before beginning my words, I remember with respect distinguished Patriarch Mesrob Mutafyan, who passed away on March 8, 2019, and offer my condolences to his family, relatives and the entire Armenian community.

This year as well, I remember with respect the Ottoman Armenians who lost their lives under harsh conditions of the First World War and offer my sincere condolences to their grandchildren.

During the last epoch of the Ottoman Empire, massive humanitarian crises took place both inside its borders and in the neighboring geographies, as had been the case during any other empire’s disintegration period.

I wish Allah’s mercy upon other Ottoman citizens, as well, who died because of epidemics and migrations as well as acts of sedition spearheaded by gangs and armed groups that escalated as a result of the weakening of the state authority.

The Armenian community provided great contributions to our country by bringing up esteemed citizens both during the Ottoman Empire and throughout the history of the Republic nearing its centennial.

Our Armenian citizens, as equal and free citizens, have important roles in every sphere of the social, political and commercial life of our country today, as they did in the past.

It is our common objective for these two peoples, who have shared their grief and joy throughout the history, to heal the wounds of the past and further strengthen their ties.

We will continue to stand with you for the alleviation of your sufferings and the resolution of your problems.

I especially would like to underline that the peace, security and happiness of the Armenian community in our country are of very special importance to us.

We will stand against those who allow even a single Armenian citizen of ours to be alienated or excluded.

On this occasion, I hope that the Armenian community's new religious leader is elected as soon as possible, and wish you success.

I believe that the way to building a shared future is to be one and united.

In this regard, I kindly request you to avoid helping those who seek to create hatred, grudge and hostility by distorting our common history.

With these thoughts in my mind, I remember with respect, once again, the Ottoman Armenians whom we lost during the First World War.”

RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY