
Armenia's Democratic Development In Interest Of The US -Armenia Bilateral Relationship

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Societal tensions will only increase if the authorities fail to take swift, dramatic, and substantive measures to heal the serious divisions in the country that the presidential election and its violent aftermath exacerbated, David J. Kramer, Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor said before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

"While all elements of society have an obligation to engage in constructive dialogue and to act responsibly, the heaviest responsibility lies with those who actually hold power - the government," he said.

"It is in the interest of the U.S.-Armenia bilateral relationship and in the interest of the Armenian people to see the new government in Yerevan succeed in deepening Armenia's democratic development. On a positive note, I found the Ombudsman to be playing an important role on behalf of democratic reform in the country," Mr. Kramer said.

As to Azerbaijan, he noted that there are some serious concerns about the state of democracy and the protection of human rights in this country. "In my meetings I focused on democracy and human rights concerns which are essential for the type of relationship. We seek to bring our cooperation on democratization up to the level of our security and energy collaboration. Azerbaijan's progress on democratic reform is key not only to the strengthening of our bilateral relationship, but also to Azerbaijan's own long-term stability," he said.

Commenting on the forthcoming presidential election, Mr Kramer said, "A key factor in determining the credibility of the entire elections process, and for establishing broad confidence in the legitimacy of the outcome of the election, is serious domestic and international election monitoring. It is especially unfortunate that this spring Azerbaijani courts deregistered and annulled Azerbaijan's largest independent domestic election monitoring NGO, the Election Monitoring Center (EMC)."

Armenia Will Never Stop Pressing For Armenian Genocide International Recognition

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Armenia never stopped and will never stop pressing for international recognition of the Armenian Genocide perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire, RA Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian told a news conference in Yerevan today.

"We just want normal relations with our neighbors and stand for normalization of relations with Turkey without preconditions. President Sargsyan's invitation is a good will gesture which never means that we question the fact of Genocide. We will not make concessions in recognition of Turkey's borders or in the Nagorno Karabakh issue either. Now, we are waiting for Turkey's response," the Minister said.

Turkey severed its ties and closed its border with Armenia in 1993 as a token of solidarity with Azerbaijan in the Nagorno Karabakh issue.

Ankara also says the normalization of ties depends on Armenia's formal recognition of the current borders with Turkey and changing its policy of calling for worldwide recognition of the Armenian Genocide at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

In a sign of readiness to normalize ties, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan proposed "a fresh start" in relations with Turkey in an article published in The Wall Street Journal earlier this month.

Sargsyan also invited Gul to a World Cup qualifying match between Armenian and Turkish teams on September 6.
