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Ms. E. Tendayi Achiume
Special Rapporteur on contemporary
forms of racism, racial discrimination,
xenophobia and related intolerance
Palais des Nations
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Re: Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance: Call for input

Dear Special Rapporteur Achiume,

The Armenian Bar Association welcomes your call for input on combating the glorification of practices that contribute to fueling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance. The ABA is an international non-profit organization of judges, attorneys, law professors, law students, and legal professionals that addresses and provides education on areas of legal concern to the Armenian community. We write to inform you of the harmful activities of the Grey Wolves, a group whose ideology is characterized by exaggerated nationalism and racist violence against ethnic minorities in Turkey and around the world.¹ The purpose of this letter is to help stop the Grey Wolves before they further realize their dangerous worldview of racist violence and ethnic purity.

I. Background

1. The Grey Wolves is a Turkish ultra-nationalist organization and movement affiliated with the Nationalist Movement Party (“MHP”) of Turkey.² Founded in the 1960s by Colonel Alparslan Turkes, the organization is officially known as Ulku Ocaklari (Idealist Hearths) and is currently allied with Turkish President Erdogan.³ The organization, known to be Pan-Turkist and neo-fascist, serves as a youth organization that has been characterized as MHP's paramilitary or militant wing. While its goal in its early days was to rally against communism and leftists,⁴ it garnered attention in the 1970s and 1980s when its members launched a wave of bomb attacks and shootings that killed hundreds of people, including public

¹ German Ministry of the Interior, 2013 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends, June 18, 2014, p. 27, <https://www.bmi.bund.de/SharedDocs/downloads/EN/publikationen/2014/vsb-kurzfassung-2013-en.html>.

² Ezel Sahinkaya, *Shadowy Turkish Ultra-Nationalist Group Under Scrutiny in Europe*, VOA NEWS (Dec. 8 2020), <https://www.voanews.com/extremism-watch/shadowy-turkish-ultra-nationalist-group-under-scrutiny-europe>.

³ *The Grey Wolves conquering Europe*, Enlightenment and Extremism Research Unit, MENA RESEARCH CENTER (June 30, 2020), <https://mena-studies.org/the-grey-wolves-conquering-europe/>.

⁴ Int'l Crisis Group, *Crying “Wolf”: Why Turkish Fears Need Not Block Kurdish Reform* 9-10 (2013), <https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/crying-wolf-why-turkish-fears-need-not-block-kurdish-reform>.

officials, journalists, students, lawyers, labor organizers, and left-wing activists.⁵ The primary targets of their attacks have been non-Turkish ethnic minorities, such as Armenians, living in Turkey. And as a result, many organizations, academics, and governments have labeled the group a terrorist organization.⁶

2. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, the Grey Wolves expanded their work into post-Soviet states that had Turkish populations. According to numerous reports, thousands of its members fought in the First Nagorno-Karabakh (“Artsakh”) War on the Azerbaijani side, and the First and Second Chechen Wars on the Chechen side.⁷ Under Devlet Bahçeli, who is the current chairman of the MHP and Turkes’ successor, the party and the Grey Wolves have presented themselves as moderates, expressing their support for liberal democracy and downplaying their nationalistic behavior.⁸ However, in recent years, its members still engage in attacks against Kurdish and leftist activists.⁹ The organization has also worked strenuously to branch out and have an essential role in various Western European countries where there is a significant Turkish community like the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany and the Turkish controlled part of Cyprus.¹⁰ The Grey Wolves are currently supported by 3.6% of the Turkish electorate.¹¹ Currently, the group is banned from Azerbaijan following an attempt to rise to power in 1995 (see, however, paragraphs 8-11, *infra*), Kazakhstan, and most recently in France.¹² However in Azerbaijan, reports claim that the Grey Wolves continue to operate through various political activities.¹³

3. In the last several decades, there have been numerous examples of how the Grey Wolves organization and its members around the world continue to harass, attack, and ignite xenophobic behavior against Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, and other groups. The Grey Wolves have murdered pro-Kurdish actors, destroyed their political offices, and have instigated riots against various Kurdish groups in Turkey.¹⁴ Members of the Grey Wolves have actively held demonstrations opposing the development of Greek-Turkish relations and have demanded the deportation of the Patriarchate to Greece in Turkey.¹⁵ In 2011, an Armenian serving in the Turkish army was murdered on April 24 (Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day) by a member of the Grey Wolves.¹⁶ The group has also protested Armenian Genocide commemorations in Turkey. These incidents have also fueled hate crimes, xenophobic acts, and further

⁵ Martin Lee, *Turkish Dirty War Revealed, but Papal Shooting Still Obscured*, L.A. TIMES (April 13, 1998), <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-apr-12-op-38664-story.html>.

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ Alex MacDonald, *Who are the Grey Wolves and why is France banning them?*, MIDDLE EAST EYE (November 7, 2020), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/grey-wolves-france>.

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ Sahinkaya, *supra* note 2; see also Amberin Zaman, *Turkey grants Kurdish militants no peace, even in death*, AL MONITOR (April 28, 2020), <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2020/04/turkey-fight-kurdish-militants-diyarbakir-human-rights.html#ixzz6nEYH07ZR>.

¹⁰ *Grey Wolves conquering, supra* note 3.

¹¹ Dogu Ergil, *Parties and political identities*, SUNDAY’S ZAMAN (April 22, 2014), <https://web.archive.org/web/20141019041227/http://www.todayszaman.com/newsDetail.action%3Bjsessionid%3DSihaaFP4f7RR3ujAwruL437B?newsId=345791&columnistId=0>.

¹² *Russian think tank labels Turkish far-right Grey Wolves as ‘extremist’ organisation*, AHVAL (Aug. 18, 2020), <https://ahvalnews.com/ultranationalists/russian-think-tank-labels-turkish-far-right-grey-wolves-extremist-organisation>.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Grey Wolves conquering, supra* note 3.

¹⁵ *The Violations of the Human Rights of the Greek Minority in Turkey: Atrocities and persecutions 1923–2009*, The Constantinopolitan Society 31 (2009), http://www.cpolitan.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/The_Constantinopolitan_Society_booklet_low.pdf.

¹⁶ PanArmenian Network, *Ethnic Armenian soldier in Turkey killed by Bozkurtlar member*, (May 18, 2011), <https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/70221/>.

violence in other countries.

II. Activity of the Grey Wolves

A. Turkey

4. Many decades prior to the formation of the Grey Wolves, German Nazis found inspiration in the Turkish nationalist movements of the time,¹⁷ which were an important motor for the Armenian Genocide.¹⁸ In Turkey today, the Grey Wolves continue to have strong ties with the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), despite Turkey's denial of the movement's existence and its responsibility for various acts of violence against minority groups in Turkey.¹⁹ In reality, although the Grey Wolves organization was perceived to be inactive at the beginning of the 21st century, this changed in 2015 when its members attacked the Thai Embassy in Istanbul and later bombed a Hindu shrine in Bangkok.²⁰ Its members also began issuing public statements inciting violence against Armenians²¹ and Kurds.²²

5. Currently, Olcay Kilavuz, the president of the Grey Wolves, holds a seat in Turkey's parliament as an MHP representative, and Devlet Bahçeli, who is known for supporting the far-right movement, has on several occasions been seen making the Grey Wolves salute.²³ Politicians from other parties have also been seen forming the Grey Wolves hand gesture, such as Meral Aksener, leader of the İyi Party, and even President Erdogan.²⁴

6. Xenophobic speech that echoes the Grey Wolves ideology of anti-Armenian sentiment has also been commonly used by Turkish public officials and figures. For example, during a briefing in May 2020, President Erdogan stated, "We do not allow terrorist leftovers of the sword in our country."²⁵ "Leftovers of the sword" is a term that is used in Turkey that refers to the survivors of the massacres that mainly targeted Christian Armenians, Greeks and Assyrians in the Ottoman Empire and its successor state

¹⁷ See generally STEFAN IHRIG, ATATURK IN THE NAZI IMAGINATION (2014).

¹⁸ See generally TANER AKCAM, A SHAMEFUL ACT: THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AND THE QUESTION OF TURKISH RESPONSIBILITY (2007).

¹⁹ No: 726, 4 November 2020, Press Release Regarding the French Council of Ministers' Decision on the dissolution of the 'Grey Wolves' Movement, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs (4 Nov. 2020), http://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_726_bozkurtlar-hareketinin-kapatilmasina-iliskin-bakanlar-kurulu-karari-hk.en.mfa.

²⁰ Susan Cunningham, *Thailand's Shrine Bombing – The Case for Turkey's Grey Wolves*, FORBES (Aug. 24, 2015), <https://www.forbes.com/sites/susancunningham/2015/08/24/thailands-shrine-bombing-the-case-for-turkeys-grey-wolves/?sh=6df802525d3f>.

²¹ Tom Stevenson, *Analysis: The growing strength of Turkey's ultra-nationalists*, MIDDLE EAST EYE (June 2, 2016), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/analysis-growing-strength-turkeys-ultra-nationalists>.

²² SCF, *Turkey's Grey Wolves share armed photo to threaten Kurds regarding Kirkuk*, STOCKHOLM CENTER FOR FREEDOM (Oct. 1, 2017), <https://stockholmcf.org/turkeys-grey-wolves-share-armed-photo-to-threaten-kurds-regarding-kirkuk/>.

²³ Alex MacDonald, *Increasing tensions see resurgence of Turkey's far-right street movements*, MIDDLE EAST EYE (Sept. 22, 2015), <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/increasing-tensions-see-resurgence-turkeys-far-right-street-movements>; *Turkey condemns Austria's ban on 'Gray Wolves' salute*, HURRIYET DAILY NEWS (Feb. 14, 2019, 12:39 PM), <https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-condemns-austrias-ban-on-grey-wolves-salute-141230>; Josh Hutchinson, *Out of Hand Everton striker Cenk Tosun denies making far-right 'Grey Wolves' hand gesture after scoring in FA Cup win over Rotherham*, THE SUN (Jan. 9, 2021, 7:37 PM), <https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/football/13696576/everton-rotherham-fa-cup-tosun-grey-wolves/>.

²⁴ Stevenson, *supra* note 21.

²⁵ Uzey Bulut, *Turkey: Erdogan uses 'Leftovers of the Sword' anti-Christian hate speech*, GENOCIDE WATCH (May 11, 2020), <https://www.genocidewatch.com/single-post/2020/05/11/Turkey-Erdogan-uses-Leftovers-of-the-Sword-anti-Christian-hate-speech>.

Turkey. Two months later, in another press conference, Erdogan threatened to finish the Armenian Genocide when he proclaimed, “We will continue to fulfill the mission our grandfathers have carried out for centuries in the Caucasus.”²⁶

B. Azerbaijan

7. In its submission to the 2020 report on “Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices,” Azerbaijan expressed that “[t]he glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism, and other related practices were still the hard realities in some regions.”²⁷ In Azerbaijan, neo-Nazi ideology manifests in the actions of the Grey Wolves and sympathizers more broadly.

a. Grey Wolves and Military Conflict

8. Since mid-2020, the symbols and ideologies representing the Grey Wolves have become prevalent and glorified in Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijani diaspora following Azerbaijan's military aggression against the ethnic Armenians of Artsakh. For example, during various demonstrations in July, when Azerbaijan first violated the cease-fire, and October, during the 2020 Artsakh conflict, Azerbaijani protestors would hold the Grey Wolves salute in response to Armenian protestors.²⁸ On social media platforms, such as Twitter and Instagram, the replies of Azerbaijani accounts to Armenian posts would include the emojis of a wolf and the ‘sign of the horns,’ in addition to incitements to violence and hate.²⁹

9. During and after the 2020 Artsakh conflict, photos and videos emerged of Syrian mercenaries,³⁰ hired by Azerbaijan and Turkey, and Azerbaijani soldiers making the Grey Wolves hand gesture. In one video including an Armenian POW, an Azerbaijani soldier can be seen forming the Grey Wolves symbol before striking the Armenian POW on the head.³¹ The symbol, however, has not solely been used by low-ranking Azerbaijani military officials. For instance, on 10 December 2020, when Azerbaijan and Turkey held a victory parade in Baku, Azerbaijan, an Azerbaijani general made the symbol of the Grey Wolves.³²

²⁶ Aris Janigian and Mark Arax, *Op-Ed: Why Armenians everywhere stand with those in Nagorno-Karabakh*, L.A. TIMES (Oct. 16, 2020, 3:00 AM), <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/story/2020-10-16/op-ed-why-armenians-everywhere-stand-with-those-in-nagorno-karabakh>.

²⁷ U.N. Human Rights Council, *Combating glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*, ¶ 5, U.N. Doc A/HRC/44/58 (May 19, 2020).

²⁸ S Leeza Arakelian, *Azerbaijanis Disrupt Armenian Flashmob in Cambridge, Mass.*, ASBAREZ (July 27, 2020), <https://asbarez.com/195731/azerbaijanis-disrupt-armenian-flashmob-in-cambridge-mass/>; Sipan, Twitter (July 28, 2020, 7:48 AM), <https://twitter.com/sipandro/status/1288124057901096960>; ‘Jihad jihad jihad’ – Azeris demonstrating in Washington DC, PANARMENIAN (Oct. 21, 2020, 7:36 PM), <https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/286869/>; Melike Capan, TWITTER (Sept. 30, 2020, 4:27 AM), <https://twitter.com/melikecapan/status/1311266387386564608>.

²⁹ Narin Briar, *Negligent Social Media Platforms Breeding Grounds for Turkish Nationalism, Hate Speech*, ARMENIAN WEEKLY (Oct. 29, 2020, 12:58 PM), <https://armenianweekly.com/2020/10/29/negligent-social-media-platforms-breeding-grounds-for-turkish-nationalism-hate-speech/>.

³⁰ Lindsey Snell, TWITTER (Jan. 30, 2021, 3:23 AM), <https://twitter.com/LindseySnell/status/1355476669138661378>; Murad Gazdiev, TWITTER (Oct. 11, 2020, 11:11 AM), <https://twitter.com/MuradGazdiev/status/1315354397539528707>; Lindsey Snell, TWITTER (Sept. 22, 2020, 12:34 PM), <https://twitter.com/LindseySnell/status/1308489785493852160>.

³¹ Artak Beglaryan, TWITTER (Nov. 23, 2020, 10:08 AM), https://twitter.com/Artak_Beglaryan/status/1330936149347536900.

³² Siranush Ghazanchyan, *Azerbaijani general making the Grey Wolves sign at Baku parade*, PUBLIC RADIO OF ARMENIA, (Dec. 10, 2020, 8:49 PM), <https://en.armradio.am/2020/12/10/azerbaijani-general-making-the-grey-wolves-sign-during-baku-parade>.

10. More recently, Devlet Bahçeli announced that the Ulku Ocaklari Education and Culture Foundation was permitted by both President Erdogan and Azerbaijan's President, Ilham Aliyev, to build a school in occupied Shushi of Artsakh.³³ The two heads of state are set to attend the school's groundbreaking imminently.³⁴ The construction of a Grey Wolves school is of great concern as it will further promote neo-fascism and neo-Ottomanism, and undermine any peaceful resolution of the Artsakh conflict. This concern is particularly urgent considering the Grey Wolves have conducted similar operations in schools of occupied northern Syria.³⁵

11. Invocations of neo-Nazism more broadly were present during the 2020 Artsakh conflict. After the November 10, 2020 Trilateral Statement, which ended the conflict and resulted in significant loss of territory for Artsakh,³⁶ images started appearing of a silver vehicle near Shushi spray-painted with swastikas and the word "Sumqayit."³⁷ Sumqayit, or Sumgait, is a city in Azerbaijan where an anti-Armenian pogrom took place on February 28, 1988, involving the murder and mutilation of ethnic Armenians in the city.³⁸ The pogrom resulted in at least 32 people massacred and hundreds wounded,³⁹ and was followed by another anti-Armenian pogrom on January 13, 1990 in Baku, resulting in the murder of at least 46 ethnic Armenians.⁴⁰ Thus, the swastika together with the word "Sumqayit" indicate a popular understanding that neo-Nazism is embedded in anti-Armenian ideology in Azerbaijan.

b. Parallels in State Discourse

12. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination has repeatedly noted its concern about racial discrimination experienced by ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan,⁴¹ and Azerbaijani public officials and figures themselves have frequently voiced threatening statements alluding to massacres and genocides of Armenians. In 2005, Hajibala Abutalybov, former Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, said to a visiting German delegation while serving as Mayor of Baku: "Our goal is the complete elimination of

³³ *Grey Wolves Announce School Opening in Nagorno-Karabakh*, PERSECUTION INT'L CHRISTIAN CONCERN (Jan. 27, 2021), <https://www.persecution.org/2021/01/27/terrorist-organization-grey-wolves-announce-school-opening-nagorno-karabakh/>.

³⁴ *Erdogan "set to attend Grey Wolves school groundbreaking" in Shushi*, PANARMENIAN.NET (Feb. 22, 2021), https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/290525/Erdogan_set_to_attend_Grey_Wolves_school_breaking_in_Shushi.

³⁵ *CEO, Turkish 'grey wolf' invades children's schools north of Aleppo*, VDCNSY (Feb. 10, 2019), <https://vdc-nsy.com/en/archives/6249>.

³⁶ *9 Points Signed by Aliyev, Pashinyan, Putin on Karabakh*, CIVILNET (Nov. 10, 2020, 2:37 AM), <https://www.civilnet.am/news/2020/11/10/9-Points-Signed-by-Aliyev-Pashinyan-Putin-on-Karabakh/407092>.

³⁷ *Nagorno-Karabakh aftermath sees corpses and burnt-out cars line roads, as UN is called in*, ABC NEWS AUSTRALIA (Nov. 13, 2020, 3:33 PM), <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-11-14/nagorno-karabakh-corpse-vehicle-shell-aftermath-un-russia-help/12883842>; *Vision Of Hell: The Aftermath Of Fighting Around Key Nagorno-Karabakh City*, Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty (Nov. 13, 2020, 1:06 PM), <https://www.rferl.org/a/mass-casualties-of-nagorno-karabakh-conflict-around-shushi/30947028.html>.

³⁸ *Soviet Tells of 'Pogroms' by Rioters in Azerbaijan*, WASHINGTON POST (Mar. 15, 2020), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1988/03/16/soviet-tells-of-pogroms-by-rioters-in-azerbaijan/56dc16e1-9aeb-40cd-9ffd-0f176a55a223/>; Felicity Barringer, *Soviet Armenians Mourn their Dead*, N.Y. TIMES (Mar. 9, 1988), <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/03/09/world/soviet-armenians-mourn-their-dead.html>.

³⁹ *Conflict in the Soviet Union: Black January in Azerbaijan*, HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH, 5 (May 1991), <https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/u/ussr/ussr915.pdf>.

⁴⁰ *Id.* at 7.

⁴¹ *See, e.g.*, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations, ¶ 10, CERD/C/AZE/CO/4 (Apr. 14, 2005); Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations, ¶ 15, CERD/C/AZE/CO/6 (Sept. 7, 2009); Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Concluding Observations, ¶ 27, CERD/C/AZE/CO/7-9 (June 10, 2016).

Armenians. You Nazis eliminated the Jews in the 1930s and 40s, right? You should be able to understand us.”⁴² Similarly, on 28 October 2020, Nurlan Ibrahimov, head of the press service of the UEFA “Qarabagh” football club of Azerbaijan, wrote on Facebook: “We must kill all Armenians—children, women and the elderly. We need to kill them without making a distinction. No regrets. No compassion.”⁴³

13. Another example of the disturbing parallels between attitudes towards Armenians and Nazism in state discourse came in January 2021, when Azerbaijan released commemorative stamps containing photo collages of a doctor and a soldier.⁴⁴ Critically, the image shows someone fumigating the region of Artsakh.⁴⁵ The likening of a people to a pest indicates that the state embraces a discourse of extermination that parallels Nazi discourse on ethnic purity.

C. Other Parts of the World

14. In various parts of the world, the Grey Wolves’ aggression and incitement of violence against Armenians rose significantly during the 2020 Artsakh conflict. In October 2020, Turkish and Azerbaijani nationals in the towns of Vienne and Decines-Charpieu, France, took to the streets “looking for Armenians.”⁴⁶ The march was orchestrated by the Grey Wolves,⁴⁷ and involved a group of about 250 people chanting threats against Armenians. The group displayed the Grey Wolves hand symbol and yelled threats like “We are going to kill the Armenians.”⁴⁸

15. Five days later, in Lyon, France, both the Armenian Genocide Memorial and the Armenian National Memorial Center were vandalized with anti-Armenian graffiti that included ‘RTE,’ in reference to President Erdogan, and the words ‘Grey Wolves.’⁴⁹ Following these incidents, French Interior Minister Gerard Darmanin announced on Twitter that the Grey Wolves movement would be dissolved in France, stating that it “incites discrimination and hatred and is implicated in violent actions.”⁵⁰

16. The Grey Wolves and Turkish and Azerbaijani nationalists in Germany also took to inciting violence against Armenians. It was reported that Armenian households had been receiving flyers that stated, “We are with our Azerbaijani brothers and we will not allow Armenian infidel dogs to live comfortably in

⁴² Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 110th Congress, Second Session, June 18th, 2008, Serial No. 110-200, p. 5.

⁴³ *UEFA Bans Azeri Soccer Officer Who Said ‘We Must Kill All Armenians’*, ASBAREZ (Nov. 4, 2020), <http://tiny.cc/oub5tz>.

⁴⁴ *Postage stamps dedicated to Azerbaijani heroes issued*, AZTV (Jan. 6, 2021, 12:15 PM), <http://www.aztv.az/en/news/11015/postage-stamps-dedicated-to-azerbaijani-heroes-issued>.

⁴⁵ Jake Hanrahan, TWITTER (Jan. 10, 2021, 5:14 PM), https://twitter.com/Jake_Hanrahan/status/1348438123399835656; Neil Hauer (@NeilPHauer), TWITTER (Jan. 10, 2021, 6:01 PM), <https://twitter.com/NeilPHauer/status/1348451742464274437> (“Cartoons... depicting Karabakh Armenians as vermin to be killed were popular during the war. Now seems they’re officially state-endorsed as well.”).

⁴⁶ Clea Skopeliti, *Video shows Turkish and Azeri nationals ‘looking for Armenians’ in France*, THE INDEPENDENT (Oct. 29, 2020, 3:29 PM), <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turks-azeris-lyon-france-armenians-vienne-video-b1422175.html>.

⁴⁷ Tim Hume, *Turkish Ultranationalist Group Linked to ‘Hunt. For Armenians’ in France*, VICE (29 Oct. 2020, 12:47 PM), <https://www.vice.com/en/article/epddna/turkey-france-armenia-grey-wolves-lyon>.

⁴⁸ *Turkish nationalist ‘Grey Wolves’ linked to targeting of Armenians in France*, AHVAL (Oct. 30, 2020, 1:36 PM), <https://ahvalnews.com/grey-wolves/turkish-nationalist-grey-wolves-linked-targeting-armenians-france>.

⁴⁹ Paul Antonopoulos, *Armenian Genocide memorial in Lyon vandalized with pro-Erdoğan graffiti*, GREEK CITY TIMES (Nov. 2, 2020), <https://greekcitytimes.com/2020/11/02/armenian-genocide-memorial-lyon/>.

⁵⁰ Gerald Darmanin, TWITTER (Nov. 4, 2020, 4:00 AM), <https://twitter.com/GDarmanin/status/1323958183384305667>.

Germany.”⁵¹ The flyer also included the threatening statement that “The Grey wolves will get you” and “The Grey Wolves are not far from you!”⁵² Members of the Grey Wolves also took the streets of Belgium to pass around flyers titled “the false claim of the Armenian Genocide.”⁵³

III. Responsive Measures

17. As a response to the violence carried out by the Grey Wolves around Europe, measures have been adopted by certain states with a view to countering this movement and ideology.

18. France has taken the strongest stance and has banned the Grey Wolves in light of their “extremely violent” actions and threats. This ban prohibits the symbol, and members of the group are to be fined or imprisoned for convening.⁵⁴ Turkey’s government had an opportunity to support France’s action and express its own condemnation of the ultranationalist group’s actions; however, Turkey’s foreign ministry instead responded that they would “react to this decision in the harshest way.”⁵⁵

19. Germany has tried to follow suit. The German Green Party MPs, including a Turkish-German politician, called the organization “Erdogan’s extended arm” whose members “repeatedly stir up hatred, threaten people, and are involved in acts of violence.”⁵⁶ Germany has not yet enacted any law or policy about the Grey Wolves but calls to do so continue.⁵⁷ Austria banned the Grey Wolves salute in 2019.⁵⁸

20. While in Europe there is action being taken to combat the group, Turkey and Azerbaijan have been notably silent and their silence serves as implicit encouragement for this egregious behavior, as the ideology permeates through society and normalizes certain ways of thinking. Turkey has in the past even denied that the Grey Wolves exist, ignoring the problems that such organized hate crimes create, and implicitly encouraging their perpetration.⁵⁹ For example, on February 12, 2021, a Turkish television network conducted a survey with passers-by in Istanbul asking what they would do if they could get away with it; an Azerbaijani woman stopped in the street said she would behead 20 Armenians.⁶⁰ While Turkey censors a great amount of speech criticizing its own government, this selective censorship which allows such xenophobic rhetoric to be elevated and glorified sets a dangerous tone of acceptance throughout the country.

⁵¹ The Editor, *The Grey Wolves Are Disseminating Threatening Flyers To Armenian Households In Germany*, ZARTONK MEDIA (Nov. 16, 2020), <https://zartonkmedia.com/2020/11/16/the-grey-wolves-are-disseminating-threatening-flyers-to-armenian-households-in-germany/>.

⁵² *Id.*

⁵³ Oguzhan Karki, FACEBOOK (Nov. 1, 2020), <https://www.facebook.com/oguzhan.karki/posts/10224826959920011>.

⁵⁴ Patrick Keddie, *France has banned the Grey Wolves--but who are they?*, AL JAZEERA (Nov. 24, 2020), <https://www.aljazeera.com/features/2020/11/24/france-has-banned-the-grey-wolves-but-who-are-they>

⁵⁵ MacDonald, *supra* note 7.

⁵⁶ *Id.*

⁵⁷ Richard Connor, *German lawmakers urge ban on extreme-right Turkish Gray Wolves*, DEUTSCHE WELLE (Nov. 7, 2020), <https://www.dw.com/en/german-lawmakers-urge-ban-on-extreme-right-turkish-gray-wolves/a-55528032>

⁵⁸ Keddie, *supra* note 53.

⁵⁹ *France bans Turkish ultra-nationalist Grey Wolves group*, DEUTSCHE WELLE (Nov. 4, 2020), <https://www.dw.com/en/france-bans-turkish-ultra-nationalist-grey-wolves-group/a-55503469>

⁶⁰ *Criminal complaint filed against Azeri woman wishing to behead 20 Armenians*, PANARMENIAN.NET (Feb. 12, 2021), https://www.panarmenian.net/eng/news/290241/Criminal_complaint_filed_against_Azeri_woman_wishing_to_behead_20_Armenians. See also, HABER ZAMANI, 20 TANE ERMENİ BAŞI KESERDİM! AZERİ KADIN ORTALIĞI SALLADI! RESMEN YIKTI GEÇTİ...! (Feb. 17, 2021), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o-DX9gye9FY>.

21. The implicit encouragement from Turkey and Azerbaijan is detrimental to any chances of curtailing hate speech towards Armenians, and is contradictory to many of the countries' own adopted statements. Turkey contributed a statement for the UN Secretary General's report on the implementation of a resolution on "A global call for concrete action for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action."⁶¹ In its statement Turkey reaffirms its commitments to the ICERD and cites other Turkish law that seeks to criminalize xenophobia and racism, yet it does not follow this in practice. Similarly, Azerbaijan has legislation against racism and racial discrimination,⁶² yet it has not used these laws to try to deter the rampant hate speech in that country, around the world, and propagated on online platforms by their citizens. The hate speech online is particularly noxious,⁶³ and the states of Turkey and Azerbaijan have not taken any steps aimed at preventing and countering hate speech. Lack of any control of online hate speech is dangerous and incites an inordinate amount of violence that should be roundly condemned and deterred by the state.

IV. Conclusion

22. Particularly in the context of Erdogan's Pan-Turkic expansionist vision from the Mediterranean to Libya and beyond, and Turkey's illicit use of armed force to reach its objectives,⁶⁴ it is critical to understand the radical ideological streams undergirding the politics of the region and around the world. The Grey Wolves and its sympathizers drive racist violence towards ethnic minorities. The group should be understood as a dangerous ideology paralleling Nazism in form - in light of indications of state support - and in substance - in light of explicit calls for the eradication of certain ethnic groups. Azerbaijan's aggression towards Artsakh and its Armenians is both a recent manifestation of this dangerous ideology, and a warning of a disturbing, growing trend.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

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⁶¹ U.N. Secretary-General, *Global efforts for the total elimination of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance and the comprehensive implementation of and follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action*, U.N. Doc. A/69/354 (Aug. 26, 2014), https://www.iam.int/sites/default/files/UN_Documents/69th_Session/A_69_354.pdf

⁶² ECRI, *ECRI Report on Azerbaijan*, (June 7, 2016) <https://rm.coe.int/fourth-report-on-azerbaijan/16808b5581>

⁶³ Armenian Bar Association, *Alternative Report to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) (2020)*, <https://armenianbar.org/2020/12/23/the-armenian-bar-association-takes-action-with-the-united-nations-human-rights-treaty-bodies-starting-with-the-committee-on-the-elimination-of-racial-discrimination/>

⁶⁴ Allison Meakem, *Turkey's Year of Living Dangerously*, FOREIGN POLICY (Dec. 25, 2020), <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/12/25/turkeys-year-of-living-dangerously/>.