

Eric Avebury
House of Lords
London

1 September 2006

Dear Colleague,

On 28 April 2005 the TGNA sent a petition to the British Houses of Parliament asking us to rescind the 1916 British Parliamentary Blue Book, "The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire 1915-16." According to the TGNA this report was a forgery which harms Turkish-Armenian relations today.

The Speaker of the House of Commons acknowledged the petition, but said he could make no comment on it, as it dealt with political matters. But a group of British Members of both Houses examined the TGNA petition and sent a response to the TGNA (27 January 2006), stating their grounds for disagreement, and offering to meet TGNA members, with chosen academics, for a discussion.

There was no response to the British response.

Recently, at a symposium at Istanbul University (14-16 March 2006), Sükrü Elekdag—the chief architect of the TGNA position—discussed the TGNA petition against the 1916 Blue Book. Mr Elekda_ acknowledged that a group of British Parliamentarians had responded to the original Turkish petition, but said that the TGNA decided to ignore our letter because it was not an official communication from the British Parliament.

We wonder if you were even aware of our response (copy attached), or whether Sükrü Elekdag consulted you before stating that the TGNA should ignore it. Some of us in both Houses feel that a meeting between British and Turkish MPs and their advisors to discuss the Blue Book would be useful, and I am therefore writing to ask whether in principle you would be willing to join in such a discussion. Depending on whether the response is favourable, the practicalities of time and place could be agreed between the interested Members by email.

In order to facilitate useful dialogue, I am also offering to share all records at my disposal concerning this issue with Turkish colleagues, and I invite Turkish colleagues to do likewise. I hope we can begin to resolve our differences in this manner and pave the way to for a meaningful face-to-face exchange.

Yours sincerely,

Lord Avebury
House of Lords, London
ericavebury@bluebook.org.uk