

## COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE

Paris le 15 janvier 2015

### **Le Bureau Français de la Cause Arménienne se félicite de la clarification apportée par l'ambassadeur de France aux Etats-Unis.**

Suite à la campagne lancée conjointement par l'ANCA aux Etats-Unis et par le BFCFA en France, en réponse aux propos prononcés sur MSNBC le 12 janvier 2015 par l'ambassadeur de France aux Etats-Unis, ce dernier a tenu à transmettre le 14 janvier 2015, un message au Président de l'ANCA Ken Hachikian. Dans son message l'ambassadeur Gérard Araud déclare :

*« Je suis conscient que mes récentes déclarations ont été mal interprétées donnant une légitimité à la négation du génocide arménien. Loin de moi cette idée. Non seulement la France a reconnu officiellement le Génocide des Arméniens mais j'ai été moi-même élevé dans une ville, Marseille, avec une vibrante communauté arménienne où j'ai de nombreux amis. J'ai toujours été personnellement convaincu que les souffrances infligées aux Arméniens dans l'Empire ottoman constituaient le premier Génocide dans l'histoire moderne. J'espère que ce message dissipera tous les doutes que vous pourriez avoir sur ce sujet. »*

Le Bureau Français de la Cause Arménienne se félicite de la clarification apportée par l'ambassadeur de France aux Etats-Unis, Gérard Araud qui est conforme à la position toujours exprimée par la France. Cette mise au point claire et rapide clôt le malentendu qui aurait pu être utilisé par les adversaires de la Cause arménienne tant aux Etats-Unis qu'en France.

*« Dans cette année de commémoration du centenaire du génocide arménien, il était important que la France, l'Arménie le peuple arménien avance d'une même voix pour porter la question du génocide des Arméniens, de sa négation et même de sa réparation »* a indiqué le directeur du BFCFA Harout Mardirossian. *« Nous sommes satisfaits par la réponse apportée par l'ambassadeur Araud qui montre également à quelle point la dimension internationale est désormais incontournable pour la Cause Arménienne »* a conclu le Directeur du BFCFA.

Annexe

## **Communiqué de presse de l'Armenian National Comitee of America.**

### **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

January 15, 2015

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### **FRENCH AMBASSADOR TO THE U.S. CLARIFIES ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMENT ON MSNBC WITH ANCA LEADERS**

Washington, DC - The Ambassador of France to the United States has clarified, to leaders of the Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA), remarks he made earlier this week on the MSNBC show Andrea Mitchell Reports that could have been misinterpreted as giving legitimacy to the denial of the Armenian Genocide.

In a communication to ANCA National Chairman Ken Hachikian and ANCA National Board member Raffi Hamparian, Ambassador Gerard Araud affirmed the fact that France has officially recognized the Armenian Genocide and his personal conviction that the Armenian Genocide constituted the first genocide in modern history.

"I am aware that some of my recent declarations have been misinterpreted as giving legitimacy to the denial of the Armenian Genocide," Amb. Araud told the ANCA. "Nothing could further from me. Not only does France recognize officially the Armenian Genocide but I have been myself bred in a city – Marseilles – with a vibrant Armenian community where I had a lot of friends. I have always been personally convinced that the sufferings inflicted to the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire constituted the first genocide in the modern history. I hope this message will dispel any doubt that you could have on this topic."

Prior to becoming the Ambassador of France to the United States, Araud served as the Permanent Representative of France to the Security Council and Head of the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations. He served as the President of the Security Council in February 2010, May 2011, August 2012 and December 2013.

"We welcome Ambassador Araud's clarification of his comments regarding the

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Armenian Genocide," remarked ANCA Communications Director Elizabeth Chouldjian. "Under President Francois Hollande and previous leaders, France has been a forceful and effective advocate in the global campaign to end Turkey's denial of the Armenian Genocide. In this year of the Armenian Genocide centennial, their vigilance and active leadership is all the more critical in the pursuit of justice for this crime."

The controversy over Ambassador Araud's comments on the Armenian Genocide arose over an appearance he made on the Andrea Mitchell Reports show on MSNBC on January 12, 2015. On that show, host Andrea Mitchell began a conversation about free speech in which she remarked, "The tradition of free speech... it all began in France during the 1700's and 18th century. But there are laws in France, laws that say you cannot deny the Holocaust, laws that say you cannot deny the Armenian Genocide. So why is it permissible to be as provocative as these anti-Muslim cartoons were. This is a debate we are having journalistically here in the United States as well," Mitchell added.

In response to Andrea Mitchell's question, Ambassador Araud stated: "Actually, on the Armenian Genocide there is no law about the denial of the Armenian Genocide. There is only one law about the denial of the Holocaust. Because it is not an opinion. The Holocaust took place. So, you know, you do not express an opinion when you say the Holocaust did not take place. It is a fact."

Video of the Andrea Mitchell Reports interview is available at:  
<http://youtu.be/MtZpawxTuC4>

Moments after Ambassador Araud's comments, the ANCA social media pages erupted with concerns and calls from Armenian Americans and elected officials alike, demanding a clarification. Similar concerns were shared by the French Armenian community, prompting a strongly worded letter by the Bureau Francais de la Cause Armenienne (BFCA - ANC France) to French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius asking for an immediate explanation. The text of the BFCA letter (in French) is attached.

France officially recognized the Armenian Genocide in 2001 with the adoption of law 2001-70. Last year, on April 24th, President Francois Hollande joined the French Armenian community's commemoration in Paris, offering powerful remarks condemning this crime and calling for the end of Turkey's denial. President Hollande will be travelling to Armenia on April 24th 2015 to participate in Genocide centennial activities.

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