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## THE ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS HERITAGE OF THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA IN THE HISTORY OF NATIONAL PEDAGOGY (USING THE EXAMPLE OF TURKEY AND IRAN)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Throughout its existence, the Armenian Apostolic Church has played a decisive role in all spheres of Armenian life. In all the colonies founded by the Armenians around the world due to destiny, the Armenian Church has taken on many other tasks to protect its fragrance, preserve the Armenian identity, normalize relations between a foreign state and the Armenian community, spread education, enlightenment, and preserve the Armenian identity.*

*The article analyzes in detail the activities of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the Armenian colonies of Turkey and Iran in the process of Armenian preservation, development of Armenian education, preservation and dissemination of culture, particularly emphasizing their role and importance from the perspective of the history of Armenian pedagogy.*

**Keywords:** *history of Armenian pedagogy, Armenian Apostolic Church, diaspora, education, Armenian preservation, culture, Turkey, Iran, Bishop, educator*

### **INTRODUCTION**

An integral part of the history of the Armenian Apostolic Church is the history of the Armenian dioceses and their comprehensive study. It is not a secret that as a result of forced migration to foreign shores in different eras or voluntary Armenian migrations, the number of dioceses of the Armenian Apostolic Church exceeded the number of those in Armenia. Many of the dioceses based in the diaspora either had a short life; in our case, the Sultanate diocese, for example, either lost their former role due either to the thinning and extinction of those centers or, as in the case of the Polish-Armenian diocese, massed conversion. In this context, studying the history of the ancient

Armenian-Iranian-Turkish dioceses from ancient times to the present day is extremely important.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The history of Armenian pedagogy has been addressed by many Armenian researchers, in particular Ts. Simonyan in the "History of Armenian Pedagogy" refers to the history of Armenian pedagogical thought from the end of the 4th century AD to the years of the Third Republic of Armenia (Simonyan Ts., 2012). The author analyzes the activities of famous Armenian pedagogues of the time, showing their role in the development process of Armenian education. It is a mistake to present the history of Armenian pedagogical thought within the framework of state territorial borders.

Even today, the Armenian nation has the largest diaspora in the world, where Armenian schools operate and operate, and the role and importance of the Armenian Apostolic Church, which is at the core of the modern research of scientific pedagogues, is great in this matter. Another Armenian author A. In his textbook, Sahakyan presents the history of Armenian pedagogical thought until our times but does not emphasize the significance of the role of the Armenian Apostolic Church in the development of Armenian schooling in the Diaspora (Sahakyan A. A., 2010).

Various scholars have referred to separate episodes of the history of Armenian pedagogical thought, such as A. Shavarshyan in his work "Ghazaros Aghayan as a Pedagogue" (1958) (S. T. Vardumyan 2008) in the works, where there is also no reference to the educational processes carried out by the church. We will consider the example of our neighbouring countries, where the presence of the Armenian nation comes from a long time, taking into account the features of regional and historical connections.

## **ARMENIAN CHURCHES IN IRAN AND THEIR LEGAL STATUS**

Within the dioceses of the Armenian Apostolic Church, there were six famous monasteries and monastic complexes. In Atrpatakan province, the monastery of St. Astvatsatsin in Derik, the monasteries of St. Stepanos Nakhavka, St. Thaddeus in New Julfa, the monastery of St. Amenaprkich, St. Katarinyan, in the village of Hazarjribb in the province of Peria.

Derik St. Astvatsatsin Monastery was destroyed, and at that time, it was turned into a camp of Armenian armed groups. The monastery of St. Astvatsatsin in Hazarjrib, Peria, was destroyed.

According to the legend, the monastery of St. Thaddeus was built near the place of martyrdom of the Apostle Thaddeus or on his tomb. According to the Armenian church tradition, the virgin Sandukht, the daughter of King Sanatruk, was martyred and buried in this place. "The local Armenians," A. Hakhnazaryan writes, "It is traditionally believed that the tomb of the Apostle Thaddeus is located in the altar on the right side of the monastery, and the chapel built on the tomb of the Virgin Sandukht is located on a hill near the monastery."(A. Hakhnazaryan, 1985, 55) The exact period of monastery construction is unknown; according to the researchers, it dates back to 7-9 centuries. The basilica-type building of the monastery church was rebuilt and modified several times in the following centuries. (V. Harutyunyan, 1992, p. 413). In 1231, the vandals destroyed the monastery and looted it. According to Kirakos Gandzaketsi, during 1247-1250, under the patronage of the Armenian Constantine I, the Catholicos of Bardzrberd, the priest Hovsep rebuilt the destroyed monastery of St. Thaddeus with the permission of the Mongol Anagurak Nuin. " When the Armenian Apostolic Church (1247) was founded, the virtuous Catholicos Constantine published a circular letter concerning the tomb of the Apostle Thaddeus ordering to give him the condition of the surrounding provinces and cities, as well as a large amount of gold for the vestibule built by Archbishop Hovsep after the devastation of the Georgians before, because it was uninhabited for some time, so it was deserted. Therefore, Hovsep goes to a Tatar military commander named Anagurak-nuin, whose summer house/residence was next to the tomb of St. Thaddeus, then by his order, the church is cleaned, and after making a nave (re-consecration, reopening of the church), he builds dwellings there gathering many religious people." (Kirakos Gandzaketsi, 1961, p. 311). Afterwards, Joseph went to the chief of the Tatars, whose name was Anagurak-nui, who allowed them to make a road to St. Thaddeus Monastery and strictly ordered not to hinder the pilgrims from visiting the monastery. According to the historian Kirakos, the Mongols came to the monastery with their families, many of whom hoped to be healed, and some were even baptized there. (Kirakos Gandzaketsi, 1961, p. 312). The monastery of St. Thaddeus was completely destroyed in 1319 by a devastating earthquake. Many members of the Congregation were killed in the devastating earthquake. (Mikael Chamchyan, 1984, p. 317).

Through the efforts of the Primate of the Restored Diocese of Atrpatakan Bishop Zakaria Bestatsi, Abbot of St. Thaddeus, one of the best monuments of Armenian architecture was built on the formerly bowed monastic buildings (L. Minasyan, p. 11). In 1650, by order of the Armenian Patriarch Philip I Aghbaketsi (1633-1655), Bishop

Mkrtich, the abbot of St. Thaddeus, and the monks undertook the reconstruction of the monastic buildings destroyed during the Turkish-Persian wars, and the chapel of St. Sandukht (A. Hakhnazaryan, page 57). In 1810-1820s, Archbishop Simeon, Father of St. Thaddeus through Bznuni's efforts, built a white stone church, which was a part of the monastic complex, and its layout was similar to that of the Mother Cathedral of St. Etchmiadzin, the vestibule of the Mother Monastery. (A. Hakhnazaryan, p. 12). After the signing of the Treaty of Turkmenchay, the Armenians of Atrpatakan immigrated to Eastern Armenia. In the Maku region alone, 80 Armenian villages were emptied, thanks to which the Congregation of St. Thaddeus Monastery survived. When the leaderships of St. Stepanos Nakhavka and St. Thaddeus merged into a single administrative structure of the united Atrpatakan Diocese based in Tabriz, this famous monastic complex lost its former significance. The last abbot of St. Thaddeus Monastery was Archimandrite Petros Kajberuni, nicknamed "The Lonely One", who lived alone in the monastery for 35 years. When the population of Gharakilise Armenian village, which is the main flow of the monastery, immigrated to Soviet Armenia in 1946, the priest Father Petros, unable to return to his members, moved to Tabriz, where he died in 1948 (L. Minasyan, p. 18). The monastery of St. Thaddeus was one of the most famous pan-Armenian pilgrimage sites, visited by ordinary secular pilgrims and Armenian kings. The king of the Armenian state of Cilicia, Leon III (1269-1289), came to Atrpatakan to visit the monastery of St. Thaddeus and meet the Mongol Arghun khan, as well as he met there the famous intellectual Toros Philosopher and Abbot T. Tiratsi (A. Hakhnazaryan, page 55).

The monastery of St. Stepanos Nakhavka is one of the oldest and most beloved places of pilgrimage in Armenia, where according to the legend, the relics of St. Vardanants are summarized. Once or twice a year, hundreds of Armenian believers made a pilgrimage here with their families, "filling those desolate valleys with shouts of joy (L. Minasyan, p. 322 )

The monastery was called Magharta S. Stepanos by the people after the name of Mount Magharata, or Darashamb Monastery after the nearby village (L. Minasyan, p. 19). The monastery is located on the border of Goght province, south of Araks, in the historical Paytakaran province of Armenia, and is now part of the Atrpatakan province of Iran. According to the legend, the monastery's founders are the apostle St. Bartholomew and St. Stepanos Nakhavka (A. Hakhnazaryan, 1985, page 39). The monastic complex consists of Mayravank, in the south of which a vestibule was built, and in the northern part, a later St. Poghos-Petros small church was built. The foundation of St. Stepanos

Nakhavka monastery is unknown, and the specialists date it to 7-9 centuries. One of the mentions about the renovation of the monastery is related to 976. According to him, Hripsime, the daughter of the merciful king Ashot III, remembers in her will that her crowned father had renovated the Mother Church, which had been destroyed (A. Hakhnazaryan, page 40). The monastery was destroyed and rebuilt several times in the following years. Hakob Jughayetsi completely rebuilt the present Mayravank. In 1653 Hakob Jughayetsi was appointed an abbot of St. Stepanos Nakhavka Monastery and immediately began to build the monastery complex. In 1655 even after being elected Catholicos of All Armenians, Hakob Hayrapet continued to support the reconstruction of the monastery, which ended in 1662 (A.Hakhnazaryan, p. 41). It is interesting that the structures of the diocese of the Armenian Church in Paris of the XVII century, in the document compiled by Voskan Yernts, the monastery of St. Stepanos Nakhavka is mentioned as an archdiocese, under whose subordination there were three dioceses: the monastery of Astapat, Nakhichevan, and probably the monastery of St. Karapet of Yernjak. 1826 The Mother Church is being renovated at the expense of Agha Shirmazan, a native of Tbilisi (Georgia), and the dome of the High Altar, the sails, the drum and the dome are covered with frescoes (V. Harutyunyan, p. 423). In 1828, according to the Treaty of Turkmenchay, when the Araks River became the Russian-Persian border, the monastery of St. Stepanos Nakhavka lost the rich tax-paying dioceses of Nakhichevan and Goght on the north bank of the river. Deprived of material means, the monks were forced to close the school, and the registers kept in the monastery were transferred to the Matenadaran of St. Etchmiadzin.

St. Amenaprkich Monastery of New Julfa is located in the city of Great Maidan. The Mother Cathedral of the monastery was built in 1606. Built on the site of a temporary church that had been dilapidated for 50 years. In 1655 David I of Jugha, thanks to the leader's efforts, the glorious Mayravank was started with the donation of the people of Norjugha, which was completed in 1664 (A. Hakhnazaryan, p 39). The church is also called St. Hovsep Harematatsi, whose cross is kept there. The inside of the church is completely covered with ceramic mosaics and frescoes. According to many scholars, most of the frescoes in the church were painted by Hovhannes Mrkuz Jughayetsi, Minas and Ter-Stepanos. L. Minasyans (M. Ghazaryan, 1968, pp. 193-202). Ter-Kirakos and Barsegh were added to the illustrators mentioned above, whose names were omitted in 1968 while cleaning and repairing church frescoes (L. Minasyan, p. 57.)

In the Charsu district of New Julfa, there is also the St. Catherine Monastery or the Kusanats Monastery, which was built with the help of Khoja Yeghiazar in 1623. At

the end of the 18th and 19th centuries, 20 nuns lived in the convent, and later their number steadily decreased. The last nun was the virgin Elisabeth Israelyan, born in Tabriz in 1939. Archbishop Nerses Melik-Tankian ordained her. In the territory of St. Catherine Monastery in 1907, an orphanage workshop was opened through the efforts of the priest Bagrat Vardazaryan. Now the Norjughay women's public unions are located in the monastery's territory (L. Minasyan, p. 72-73).

In 1927, the priest Vahan Aghanyan mentioned the following monasteries and churches in New Julfa, which were also famous places of pilgrimage for the Iranian-Armenians. Saint Amenaprkhyan Monastery (Great Maidan district of New Julfa in 1664, the relic of St. Hovsep Arematatsi is kept here, built with the fundraising of the people of Nor Jugha), St. Astavatsatsin Church (Great Maidan district of New Julfa in 1613 Mkrkich Church (Charsu district of New Julfa in 1621, patron Khoja Yeghiazar) (The right hand of St. John the Baptist was donated to the church by Khoja Eliezar. According to the legend, the right was brought on the Saturday of Pentecost, which is the reason why every year on the same evening, Sunday, Iranian-Armenians go to St. Hovhannes Mkrkich Church. The people of Norjuga call this church "Right Church".), Stepanos Nakhavka Church (1614, Hagopbjanyants district of New Julfa, patron Khoja Hakobbjan, with the participation of the local community, here is kept Stephen Church (Small Maidan district of New Julfa in 1633) (V. Baybudyan, New Julfa, page 131) , St. Nerses the Great or Avetyats church (1666, New Julfa nomad or Gyavrabad district, probably built at the expense of Avetik Gilanyan, kept to the right of St. Nerses the Great), St. Hagop Metsb Church (1606 Mets Maidan district of New Julfa, a chapel located in the yard of St. Astvatsatsin Church, where the relics of Hagop Hayrapet are kept) 1916 By the will of Hovsep Poghoskhanyan, the relic of Patriarch Nikoghayos is kept), St. Katarine's virgin desert (1623 Charsu district of New Julfa, patron Khoja Yeghiazar, (priest Aghanian, op. Cit., P. 30.) St. Katarine's relic is kept) (Khoja Eliezar is the grandfather of the famous Lazarian dynasty prince Eliezer.), St. Minas or St. Lusavorich New Church (1666 (Priest Vahan dates it to 1659, probably giving the date of the foundation). St. Tabriz district, the relics of St. Minas, St. Varvara are preserved, here is the famous "Tukh Manuk" Gospel), St. George or Khojents church (1610 or 1611 in the district of Pokr Meidan or Nazar avenue of Nor Jugha, patron Khoja Nazar, The relics of St. George and "The stones that Shah Abbas the Great brought from St. Etchmiadzin to freeze the hearts of the people of Jugha from the homeland, to connect them with New Julfa"), (priest Aghanian, op. Cit., P. 41.) St. Sargis Church or Ohana Monastery (1659, New Julfa district , was built with community donation, the relic of St. Sargis is kept), St. Bethlehem

Church (1628 Mets Meydan district of New Julfa, patron Khoja Petros Velijanyan). (We have presented the information about the standing monasteries, churches and monasteries of New Julfa to V. Fr. The places of pilgrimage of Aghanyan, the Church of New Julfa, the combination of data in the works of V. Bayburdyan, New Julfa and V. Ghukasyan, The Emergence of the Armenian Diocese of New Julfa in the seventeenth century.)

The following churches stand in Tabriz, in the centre of the Atrpatakan Diocese: St. Astvatsatsin (1782 in Ghala district), which is a diocese, St. Astvatsatsin (XVIII century) in Mralan district, S. Sargis (Lilava district in 1845), S. Shoghakat (1940). in the cemetery area). ( L. Minasyan, 1968, p. 397).

The standing churches in Tehran are St. George (1795 Darvaze Ghazvin district), St. Thaddeus-Bartholomew (1820, Molavi Avenue), St. Minas (1875 in the former Vanak Armenian village, now in Tehran), St. Hovhannes Chapel (1936 Dulab Armenian Cemetery), S. Targmanchats (1968 Vahidiye district) and S. Sargis (1970 Nejatolahi Avenue). (L. Minasyan, p. 34.)

According to the calculations of L. Minasyan, an expert on the history and culture of the Iranian-Armenians, "the three dioceses together had 497 Armenian-populated villages and towns, of which 178 had uncertain churches, and the remaining 312 villages and towns had 385 churches. (L. Minasyan, p. 70.)

" In total, there are about 80 churches, 40 of which are in Atrpatakan, 20 in Tehran and 30 in the administrative areas in the dioceses of Isfahan. . (L. Minasyan, p. 70.)

## **THE LEGAL STATUS OF ARMENIAN CHURCHES IN TURKEY**

A century has passed since the Armenian Genocide, but the historical and cultural heritage of the Armenians in Turkey continues to be destroyed. Back in 1915, the Armenian historical and cultural heritage included thousands of churches and monasteries, which had great historical and artistic value. Any action taken to destroy the culture of a people or ethnic group is called a national-cultural genocide. Genocide is the annihilation of a national or religious group by physical annihilation and the destruction of its national-caring culture. Numerous facts show that along with the massacres and displacement of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk government deliberately sought to destroy the material evidence of Armenian civilization as well. Realizing the role of the church and faith in the life of the Armenian people, the Turkish government deliberately killed the Armenian clergy, destroyed churches and monasteries and thousands of medieval manuscripts, and



confiscated church property. According to the official historiography submitted to the Turkish government in 1912-1913 by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, the number of Armenian churches and monasteries throughout the Ottoman Empire date back to 2000 (including unique early Christian monuments of IV-V centuries), most of which were looted and burned during the genocide as well as were destroyed. The policy of extermination of the Young Turks against the historical and cultural heritage of the Armenian people continued in Republican Turkey as well, as these monuments were seen as unwanted witnesses to the Armenian presence.

Changing the place names of Western Armenia began in Turkey in the 1920s. Currently, more than 90% of the toponyms in Western Armenia are Turkish. Turkish ones replaced Armenian geographical names, hundreds of architectural monuments have been destroyed, or their Armenian identity has been neutralized. According to UNESCO 1974, of the 913 Armenian historical and architectural monuments that have survived since 1923, 464 have completely disappeared, 252 are in ruins, and 197 are in need of complete renovation. Armenian architectural structures were retrospectively blown up and used as targets during Turkish military exercises, and stones were used as building materials. In some rural areas, they serve as barns, warehouses and prisons. In many cases, Armenian churches have been turned into mosques. In 1987 point 6 of the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on June 18 states that the Turkish government should pay attention to the language, culture, education system of the Armenian community living in Turkey, and at the same time show proper attitude towards the Armenian monuments in Turkey. The consequent destruction or misappropriation of Armenian cultural heritage is a continuation of the Turkish policy of genocide against Armenians.

The renovation of the Holy Cross Church on Akhtamar Island is considered a political approach, which must be accompanied by clear measures so that the entire Armenian heritage, forgotten and periodically destroyed for centuries, is immediately placed under state protection, restored and returned to its rightful owners, as it is stated in international documents signed by Turkey. Therefore, this issue needs to be clarified from the point of view of international law. According to part 3 of Article 42 of the Lausanne Treaty, "the Turkish Government undertakes to take churches, synagogues, cemeteries and other religious institutions of the mentioned minorities under full protection. Naturally, the "Unified Protection" includes not only not to destroy or to ruin churches, but also their strengthening and implementation. Consequently, the Partial renovation of the building of the Church of St. Hach is not a "manifestation of goodwill",

but an extremely incomplete and belated fulfillment of the international obligations assumed by Turkey in the status of the basic law for the purpose of certain political speculation. Turkish authorities are preventing the preservation of Armenian churches and chapels that are engaged in religious services. The restoration, reconstruction or expansion of any type of Armenian church that goes beyond certain expenses is under the jurisdiction of the Religious Foundation of the General Directorate and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The neglect and destruction of architectural heritage is of global importance for both Armenian and foreign scientists.

The list of destruction of the Armenian historical and cultural heritage is quite long:

1. The temple of Tekor, built in the 5th century, a domed basilica in the village with the same name in Shirak , now in the region of Kars,Turkey, near Ani. It is now completely destroyed and turned into a mosque.

2. St. Bartholomew Monastery inAghbak. Deir, Dher, in the Vaspurakan province of Greater Armenia, on the top of a hill on the right bank of the River Great Zab. According to the legend it was founded in 1st. ccentury by King Sanatruk on the tomb of the Apostle Bartholomew after he was cured of leprosy by the water of Katnaghbyur near him. The monastery has been mentioned since the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

3. The monastery of Surb Karapet was looted and partially destroyed in 1915. It was turned into a pile of rocks. In 1960 it was used for artillery training by the Turkish army. In the future, these stones were used to create a village in the same place:

4. Varaga monastery. It is the famous religious and cultural center of medieval Armenia, located southeast of the city of Van, on the western slope of Mount Varaga.

It was founded in the VII century. The monastic complex comprises six churches, a porch, a vestibule, and outbuildings. It was completely destroyed in 1923 - 1930s by the order of the Turkish government.

5. In 1998, St. Arakelots Church in Kars was turned into a mosque.

Numerous stone fragments, valuable Armenian khachkars and stone inscriptions were used in 1973 to renovate the mosque in Bitlis. Turkey has included Ani in the preliminary list of UNESCO cultural monuments. UNESCO has approved this list, which includes 35 monuments. It will be clear in the coming years when Ani will be included in the final list. According to Turkish law, churches and affiliated institutions are not legal entities. As a result of legal restrictions, these institutions can receive income exclusively from selling, renting or leasing real estate. These institutions accumulate income from the rental of property for their own needs, as well as to help schools and

hospitals. Without the right to acquire property, Armenian institutions in Turkey may even lose their property.

If the community does not use its property for about ten years due to a reduction in the number of priests or parishioners, then under Turkish law, the state gets the right to use or dispose of that property (Alfred de Zayas, 1915-1923, Strasbourg, pp. 7-9). A detailed opinion on the state of the Armenian churches on the territory of Turkey can be made by referring in particular to the current state of an ancient Armenian church of St. Minas, in a village called Gez(Gezqoy) 9 km west of Erzurum.

"Kill 7 Armenians, you will fall into paradise"; the expressions "birth of an Armenian", Armenian and a child of an Armenian are still used as curses and insults in Erzurum. Hatred and disgust towards Armenians from the genocide of 1915 have not disappeared yet. Now they are avenging the Armenian people by turning Armenian churches into ruins. The Church of St. Minas in the old Armenian village of Gez is in extremely poor condition today. This structure of historical value has been turned into ruins. As part of the reconstruction work in the district of Aziziye, Erzurum, it turned out that the church, which Armenians built in the XVII century, was used by the locals of the district as a stable until 2012. In addition, St. Minas Church suffered, and continues to suffer, through the adventures of treasure hunters, and words insulting Armenians are written on the church walls. The destruction of the Armenian cultural heritage in Western Armenia and Turkey has been continuous. Numerous facts prove that, along with the Armenian Genocide, the Turks deliberately and intentionally sought to destroy the material evidence of the Armenian civilization as well (Mirzoyan L, p. 14-15).

Recently, the Turkish authorities have begun to restore some Armenian monuments, which is explained by the desire both to increase international prestige and develop tourism and the desire to have a new source of income. However, not all Armenian churches are in the spotlight of the Turkish state; many Armenian monuments are either destroyed, used as quarries, or turned into other buildings, such as barns, stables, and warehouses. By restoring Armenian churches, Turkey wants to cast a shadow on the policy of denying the Armenian Genocide and opening the Armenian-Turkish border. Such a course of action in Turkey is forced by "a constant denial of everything being Armenian". The Turkish policy of repairing churches has both political and economic interests. The official statement on the restoration of St.Kirakos Church was made on October 30 last year by Archbishop Aram Ateshyan. The Minister of Culture of Turkey also spoke about the restoration of the church, putting forward the interests of the economic development of his country. As for Diyarbakir St. Kirakos

Church, then in 1918, the church was turned into a mosque, and it is one of the seven churches that is located under the auspices of the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople. One of the largest Armenian churches, which housed more than 2,000 people and had seven altars, now retains only three; it has not functioned for more than 50 years and was used for sacred purposes only last year. Although the church will be renovated, there is no Armenian community in present-day Diyarbakir, and if in 2004 there were 22 Armenians, in 2006 there were 7, now there are only 3 Armenians living in Diyarbakir (Mirzoyan L., p. 16-17).

A number of international treaties that today serve as the foundation for international human rights norms and rules were enacted in 1948, following the UN General Assembly's adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the field of human rights, Turkey has signed numerous international documents that, although they do not enshrine the special rights of a minority, ensure equal rights for all. At the same time, most of the international documents, which in some way relate to minorities and their rights, were signed by Turkey with special reservations in accordance with the Constitution of the country and in order to avoid contradictions with the provisions of the Lausanne Treaty. Turkey's policy towards religious minorities, particularly towards Armenian cultural heritage, is discriminatory.

Turkey violated article 63 of the Constitution adopted in 1982 by him, which establishes the State's responsibility for preserving historical, cultural and natural heritage and the measures taken for this purpose. These actions also do not comply with the Turkish Criminal Code.

These actions also do not comply with the Turkish Criminal Code. There is a chapter on "Crimes against religious freedom" in the Criminal Code. Turkey's policy of destroying the Armenian cultural heritage is a violation of the fundamental norms of international law guaranteeing the protection of cultural values. "Protection of cultural heritage" means respect for it and guarantee of its security, which is provided by some international documents submitted below.

1. 1899 and 1907 The Hague Conventions, in particular, 1907 Hague Fourth Convention, Rules of Articles 27 and 56.

2. On the Protection of Cultural, Scientific and Historical Monuments, Zurich Agreement of 1935, April 15:

3. UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Cultural Heritage during Armed Conflicts (The Hague Convention of 1954, May 14), two Protocols thereto (1954, May

14, and Protocols of 1999 March 26) and 1949 Additional First and Second Protocols of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

This is the "freedom" of religion in Turkey. Turkey has repeatedly committed genocide of Armenians, Jews and Assyrians. In 1974, Turkey occupied the northern part of Cyprus. Most Christian churches are being destroyed or turned into mosques. Moreover, Turkey is building mosques in different countries of the world, especially in Germany. They demand freedom from Islamic proselytism; Turkish Islamists are becoming more and more active, building schools and sponsoring mosques in foreign countries (**UN Human Rights Instruments**, P.18-20) .

The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople is one of the hierarchical thrones of the Armenian Apostolic Church, called the Patriarchate of Armenian Turkey. The Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople was founded in 1461 when after the conquest of Constantinople, Sultan Mehmet II invited the local leader Bishop Hovakim (1461-1478) from Bursa, whose throne was St. Gevorg Church in Samatya and who became the leader of the newly created patriarchate. But only in 1543, with Astvatsatur I, the title of the Armenian Patriarch was applied. So far, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has had 84 thrones. The Patriarchate has been in Gumgapu since 1641.

Before the establishment of the Patriarchate, the Armenian communities living within the borders of the Ottoman Empire were included in three dioceses -Svaza, with its centre -St. Nshan Monastery, Enkuri (Ankara) with its centre St. Astvatsatsin Monastery or Karmir, Bursa (Prusa) Kyotahya (Kutina) Garamani with its centre Bursa. Bishop Hovakim led the latter. At the beginning of the XIV century, in Constantinople, there were the following churches- St. Sarkis Church, St. Gregory the Illuminator, and Part of the Latin Church of St. Nikogayos, which was allocated for Armenian ceremonies. After the Patriarchate of Constantinople established as early as the 17th century, it owned all the apostolic churches in the Ottoman Empire. In the early 1900s, the patriarchate had 1,181 churches and 132 monasteries. Today, the Patriarchate of Constantinople has 43 churches, 42 in Turkey and one on the island of Crete. Six of the 42 Armenian churches in Turkey are located outside Istanbul, in the villages of Caesarea, Diyarbakir, Derik, Iskenderun, Kirkhan and Vakifl. Many other institutions are directly or indirectly under the patriarchate (Simavoryan A., Yerevan, 2011, pp. 8-9).

The Armenian patriarchs of Constantinople were endowed with extensive religious and secular partial rights; they administered the education and enlightenment of Armenians under Turkish jurisdiction, the printing business, charities and cultural institutions, and collected partial taxes for the benefit of the state and the community

(Simavoryan A., Yerevan, 2011, p. 20). Along with the expansion and strengthening of the Ottoman Empire's borders, the Patriarchate's geographical boundaries also expanded, increasing its role and prestige, as the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople was recognized as the official representative of the Armenians living in the country. At the beginning of the 17th century, the power of the patriarchate extended to all Armenian-populated areas of Ottoman rule. The Catholicosate of Sis, the Catholicosate of Akhtamar, and the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem have ceded their leadership right to the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople. For some time, an attempt was made to occupy the sovereign position in the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin. Concerning Etchmiadzin, however, this did not happen, and the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople legally accepted the supremacy of the Mother See. The last Armenian patriarch of the Ottoman period, Zaven Ter-Yeghiayan, who was quite active, especially in 1918-1922, was forced to leave Turkey in 1922 by the Kemalist authorities.

From then until 1927, the throne of the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople remained vacant, and in 1923-1927 it was presided over by Bishop Gevorg Aslanyan, who was elected a vicar (Gabrielyan H., Yerevan, 2015, pp. 5-7).

For the first time in the Republic of Turkey, the elections for the Armenian Patriarch were held in 1927, and Mesrop Naroyan was elected patriarch from 1927 to 1944. After his death, the patriarchal throne remained vacant again, and Bishop Gevorg Aslanyan became vicar for the second time (1944–1950). And only at the end of 1950 were patriarchal elections held. Archbishop Garegin Khachatryan, who at the time was the Armenian spiritual leader in Latin America, was elected. In 1951 returning to Turkey, he assumed the duties of a patriarch. Archbishop Shnorkh Galustyan was elected patriarch in 1961 after Garegin Khachatryan's death. He was one of the longest-serving rulers from 1961 to 1990. Through his efforts, great activity was noticed in community life, and huge efforts were put in to improve the situation of the Armenians of the province. In 1990 after the death of Patriarch Shnorkh, Archbishop Garegin Kazanjyan (1990-1998) was elected the 83rd Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, and after his death in 1998, Archbishop Mesrop Mutafyan was elected patriarch. After the death of Patriarch Schnork, Archbishop Garegin Kazanjyan (1990-1998 - Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople) was elected the 83rd Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, and after the latter's death, Archbishop Mesrop Mutafyan was elected patriarch in 1998 (Melkonyan R., Yerevan, 2010, pp. 104-105).

Patriarchs have long been elected by the community. The efforts of the Turkish state to control the patriarchate became more regular in 1960 after the military coup. In

1961, the Council of Ministers passed a resolution according to which the elections of the patriarch were to be held on the day at the place chosen by the Istanbul Governor's Office. Since then, each government has tried to control the election in various ways. In 2007 the tragic incident that took place paved the way for the ruling Justice and Development Party to intervene in the Armenian elections when the situation grew to its toughest point. That year N.A.T. Mesrop S., the patriarch, who was elected in 1998, fell ill. His memory and mental abilities were severely impaired; he could not perform his duties. There were two opposing views in the patriarchate on the issue of getting out of the situation due to Mesrop's incapacity for work. Instead of seeking a compromise, both sides filed lawsuits with the Interior Ministry. The parish council, which is considered the "civil" of the patriarchate, asked for permission to elect a new patriarch. The Board of Trustees, a group of clergy, asked the ministry to approve the election of a co-patriarch. The ministry's decision came as a surprise to both sides. According to the decision, since the current patriarch was still alive, neither a new patriarch nor a co-patriarch could be elected. Instead, a vicar of the patriarch was to be elected. Thus, the "patriarchal deputy position" was created, which was unprecedented in terms of the history and traditions of the Armenian Church (The current situation of the Armenian community in Istanbul, Yerevan, 2009, pp. 154-155). It is no secret that today the Armenian community of Istanbul is facing a number of serious problems, and in the absence of the patriarch, these problems are not resolved and are becoming more acute.

## **CONCLUSION**

A century has passed since the Armenian Genocide, but to this day, the historical and cultural heritage of the Armenians in Turkey continues to be destroyed; the same cannot be said in the case of Iran, as the Armenian historical and cultural heritage is under special protection. Back in 1915, Turkey's Armenian historical and cultural heritage, including thousands of churches and monasteries, had great historical and artistic value. Any action taken to destroy the culture of a people or ethnic group is called a national-cultural genocide. Genocide is the annihilation of a national or religious group by physical annihilation and the destruction of its national-caring culture. Numerous facts prove that in parallel with the massacres and deportations of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk government deliberately sought to destroy the material evidence of Armenian civilization. Realizing the role of the church and faith in the life of the Armenian people, the Turkish government deliberately killed the Armenian clergy, destroyed churches and monasteries and thousands of

medieval manuscripts, and confiscated church property. According to the official historiography submitted to the Turkish government in 1912-1913 by the Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople, the number of Armenian churches and monasteries throughout the Ottoman Empire date back to 2000 (including unique early Christian monuments of IV-V centuries), most of which during the genocide, were robbed, burned and destroyed. The policy of extermination of the Young Turks towards the historical and cultural heritage of the Armenian people continued in Republican Turkey as well, as these monuments were considered unwanted witnesses of the Armenian presence. The process of changing the place names of Western Armenia began in Turkey in the 1920s. At present, more than 90% of the toponyms of Western Armenia are Turkish.

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