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NEWS **DASHNAKS INSIST ON TERRITORIAL CLAIMS TO TURKEY**[homepage](#)[archive](#)

By Ruzanna Khachatrian

Armenia does not recognize Turkey's territorial integrity and may in the future lay claim to lands that were populated by Armenians before the 1915 genocide, a senior member of the governing Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Dashnaktsutyun) claimed on Friday.

"The current government of which we are a part and the president whom we have supported and will support will not abandon territorial claims," Giro Manoyan, a spokesman for the nationalist party's ruling Bureau, said. "Armenia's official position is that the issue is not on our foreign policy agenda. That means it can be on the agenda tomorrow."

Recognition of Turkey's current borders has been one of Ankara's preconditions for normalizing relations with Armenia. Official Yerevan says it recognizes the existing Turkish-Armenian border which was set by the Treaty of Kars signed in 1921 following the country's takeover by Bolshevik Russia. The government of the then Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic was among the treaty's signatories

"Armenia is the successor state of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic," the Armenian Foreign Ministry explains on its website. "All of the agreements which the ASSR signed continue to be in force unless new agreements have been

signed to replace them.”

At the same time the Armenian government has repeatedly dismissed Turkish demands to officially declare that it will never claim any lands in what is now eastern Turkey.

“No Armenian government can do that because I believe the Armenia people would not allow that government to remain in power,” Manoyan said during a roundtable discussion in Yerevan.

“The fact that there are no territorial claims today, does not mean we can’t lay such claims tomorrow,” he told RFE/RL separately.

The possibility of such claims has never been publicly acknowledged by President Robert Kocharian, Defense Minister Serzh Sarkisian and two other parties represented in Armenia’s government. In a famous 2001 interview with CNN-Turk television, Kocharian sought to assure Ankara that its recognition of the 1915-1918 mass killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide would not prompt territorial demands from Yerevan.

“Genocide recognition by Turkey will not lead to legal consequences for territorial claims,” Kocharian said at the time. “The problem is that those events have taken place in Turkey, and the Republic of Armenia did not exist at that time, and today’s Republic of Armenia is not the heir to those lands,” he added.

David Phillips, a U.S. scholar who chaired the Turkish-Armenian Reconciliation Commission, wrote in a 2005 book that Kocharian’s interview “helped mollify [Turkish] concerns about Armenia’s intentions.”

But according to Manoyan, the Armenian leader simply stated that “there is no such issue on the agenda of Armenian foreign policy today.” “The president also said genocide recognition would not automatically result in territorial claims,” he said, denying any disagreements on the issue between Kocharian and Dashnaktsutyun.

Manoyan revealed last summer that the party, which also has chapters in major Armenian communities abroad, plans a major shift in its long-running campaign for international recognition of the Armenian genocide. He said Dashnaktsutyun will strive to force Turkey to pay reparations.

Kocharian, however, had told CNN-Turk that for him genocide recognition is “more of a moral issue.”

(Photolur photo: Giro Manoyan.)



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