

# Swiss prosecutor seeks imprisonment of Perinçek

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## ANKARA - Turkish Daily News

A Swiss prosecutor has demanded six months' imprisonment for a Turkish politician, saying the politician had committed "discrimination on the basis of race" in a speech delivered in Lausanne last year on Armenian genocide allegations.

In a statement released over the weekend Swiss investigating magistrate Jacques Antenen said the investigation into Dođu Perinçek due to his July 2005 speech had been finalized and that he should be sentenced to six months in prison.

Perinçek will be arrested if he arrives in Switzerland. Antenen also said and added that Perinçek's lawyer in Switzerland had been notified about the ruling, the Dođan News Agency reported.

Nevertheless, later in the day, the Swiss Embassy in Ankara clarified earlier reports saying that "the prosecutor in charge of this file has transferred it to the competent court and that the court has not yet pronounced any decision or condemnation in this case as reported by some media in Turkey."

"In Switzerland as in Turkey the principle of 'presumption of innocence' prevails until a court has made a decision," the embassy statement noted.

Perinçek was detained by Swiss authorities after delivering the speech on the occasion of the 82nd anniversary of the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, which laid the foundations of modern-day Turkey. He was released after questioning at the prosecutor's office in the canton of Winterthur.

His detention led to outrage in Ankara at the time, and the Turkish reaction was conveyed to the then-Swiss ambassador in Ankara by summoning him to the Foreign Ministry.

The Swiss National Council has approved a resolution recognizing the alleged genocide and denying the alleged genocide is a violation of the country's antiracism laws.

Gül to French FM Blazy: Would I too be arrested for denying Armenian genocide?:

Turkey categorically rejects charges of genocide and says the killings came as the Ottoman Empire was trying to quell civil unrest that was sparked by an Armenian revolt in collaboration with the invading Russian army, resulting in many Turkish casualties.

The Swiss ruling came as the Armenian diaspora stepped up efforts for worldwide recognition of the allegations of genocide on April 24, which they claim is the 91st anniversary of the incident.

The French Parliament, which has recognized allegations of genocide in the past, is now preparing to debate a bill criminalizing its denial on May 18. If passed, those who deny there was a genocide would face up to five years in jail and a fine that could be as high as 45,000 euros.

Relations suffered a major blow when the French Parliament accepted the so-called genocide in 2001, and the bill penalizing its denial may spark a new crisis in ties if it is passed.

During an informal meeting of the NATO foreign ministers held in Sofia last week, Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül personally contacted his French counterpart, Philippe Douste-Blazy, on the issue, Hürriyet daily reported yesterday.

"You are planning to hand prison sentences down to those who claim the Armenian genocide did not occur. Let's say either I or the president of Turkey visited France and held a press conference at which reporters asked us about Armenian genocide claims. And let's say we responded by saying: 'These claims are lies. They have no connection to reality.' Would you then throw either one of us in prison? Would this really suit France, a country that champions free speech and freedom of thought throughout Europe? On the one hand you are giving

people the right to do as they wish and on the other you are denying the people's right to defend themselves against false accusations. This goes against the values of Europe," he was quoted as telling the French minister by the daily.