

For Immediate Release

Contact: Erik Cummins, Bame PR, (415) 217-9341
Cheryl Bame, Bame PR, (310) 312-8800

July 29, 2010

Lawsuit Seeks Compensation for Property Confiscated During Armenian Genocide

LOS ANGELES – Building on their groundbreaking work to recover insurance claims resulting from the Armenian genocide, the law firms Kabateck Brown Kellner, Boyajian & Associates and Geragos & Geragos in Los Angeles, and Cotchett, Pitre & McCarthy in Burlingame have filed a federal class action today against the Republic of Turkey and two of that country’s leading banks to seek compensation for the property stolen by the Ottoman Empire during the Armenian genocide between 1914 and 1923.

The lawsuit, which seeks an accounting of the losses and unspecified damages estimated to be in the hundreds of millions, was filed in Los Angeles federal court and was brought under the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act, which allows U.S. citizens to seek redress for international crimes. *Dayoyan v. Republic of Turkey* (U.S. District Court, Central District of California). A copy of the complaint is attached.

The plaintiffs in this case live in Los Angeles and New York and are the grandchildren of victims of the genocide. They represent a class of all Armenians and other former Turkish citizens deported or killed by the Ottoman Empire during this tumultuous period. The defendants, the Republic of Turkey, the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey and T.C. Ziraat Bankasi, are successors for the former Ottoman Empire and its leading banks. There is no statute of limitations for war crimes or crimes against humanity.

“This case is yet another step in the process of securing justice for the millions of victims of the Ottoman Empire,” said Brian Kabateck, founding partner of Kabateck Kellner Brown. “Despite the passage of time, we believe the Republic of Turkey has enriched itself for far too long from its illegal confiscation of this property, including many pieces of priceless art which are now displayed in Turkish museums. We believe it is high time they owe up to these crimes and return what rightfully belongs to the heirs of the victims of this terrible tragedy.”

Among other damages, the class action seeks the return of lost income, such as rent, and the disgorgement of any proceeds of property sales resulting from the illegal confiscations. Millions of Armenians and other ethnic minorities lost land, homes, buildings, churches and personal property as a result of the purges, mass deportations and killings. Many countries, as well as the U.S. Congress, recognize this genocide as an international atrocity.

Earlier this year, Kabateck and his co-counsel filed suit on behalf of Greek, Assyrian, Kurdish and Jewish citizens who were killed between 1914 and 1923. The suit against

New York Life Insurance Co., which sold policies to residents of the Ottoman Empire, seeks to recover unpaid life insurance for its policyholders killed during the period. *Sarian v. New York Life* (U.S. District Court, Central District of California). In 2004, Kabateck secured a \$20 million settlement with New York Life and a \$17.5 million settlement from French insurer AXA on behalf of policyholders killed during this time.

For more information about this case or other consumer rights matters, please contact Erik Cummins at (415) 217-9341 or Cheryl Bame at (310) 312-8800.

###