

Armenian Atrocities and Genocide in and around Sivas

The uprisings seen in the neighbouring provinces after the declaration of war were equally seen in Sivas and its environs. An Armenian priest by the name of Seponil from the village of Yaycı in the district of Karahisar visited villages on the pretext of collecting aid for the Church, gathered Armenians and said to them

"The Ottomans entered the war in which they will be defeated. Russian will soon enter Erzurum, and come up to here. Russians will beat the Army in front, we in the rear. The hour has come to use the arms that we had distributed earlier to you."

Such was his propaganda. Large scale incidents were prevented in the region thanks to the necessary measures taken by the government in time, yet Armenians still committed massacres and atrocities in the region.

The telegram sent to the Ministry of the Interior on April 22, 1915, by the Governor of Sivas summarizes the events in Sivas and its environs as follows:

"The places in the province which are largely populated by the Armenians are Şebinkarahisar, Suşehri, Hafik, Divriği, Gürün, Gemerek, Amasya, Tokat and Menzifon. At the end of searches that have been carried out so far in the Turkish villages of Suşehri and in the district of Olataş, lots of illegal arms and dynamite have been found. It has been certainly established on the basis of the statements of the arrested culprits that Armenians had armed 30.000 persons in this province, 15.000 of them had already joined the Russian Army and that the remaining 15.000 persons would threaten the Turkish Army from the rear in case of its failure. Skirmishes have taken place between the Armenians and the security forces sent to the village of Tuzhisar in which the Armenian band leader Murad (Hamparsum Boyajian), member of Tashnak Organisation, had taken refuge." (Azmi Süslü: *op. cit.*, p. 88. (See also the Archives of the Department of Military History and Strategical Studies, General Staff (ATASE), No. 4/3671, kls. 2820, dos. 69, fih. 3-45.)