

The people who stood still against tanks



> Turkish Ambassador to Namibia Deniz Çakar





> **Amb. Deniz Çakar**

A DIPLOMAT'S most prominent task is to represent his/her country. I am sure all the diplomats serving their countries take pride in doing their job just as I do.

As the Ambassador of Turkey in Namibia, there are certain facts about my country that give me special pride in doing my job. For instance, I take great pride in knowing the fact that my nation does not hesitate to help people in need and because of this character, Turkey now hosts the largest refugee population in the world.

The proudest moment of my country's recent history occurred on the eve of July 15 in response to a heinous attack on our country's democratic system. On that night, a renegade group within the Turkish Armed Forces tried to overthrow the democratically elected government and take control of the country. However, they did not take the resilience of Turkish people into account. They thought with their stolen tanks, helicopters and fighter jets from the Turkish army they could

subdue the Turkish nation.

On that night, ordinary people, waiters, mechanics, students, engineers, shopkeepers and even housewives got out to the streets to protect the democracy. Instead of heeding the threats of this renegade group, they stood still in front of the tanks and protected their nation, their freedom and their independence.

Two hundred and forty-six brave souls lost their lives and more than 2 000 were wounded in protection of democracy.

The coup plotters were the followers of Fetullah Gulen, a so-called cleric who lives in Pennsylvania, United States. His organisation FETO (Fetullah Gulen Terrorist Organisation) has been secretly infiltrating the institutions of the government, especially the armed forces, police and judiciary over the years with different motives than what they appear to be. They have employed many illegal tactics such as stealing questions of the government employee entrance exams, and making bogus claims about government officials who do not support them.

The ultimate purpose was to take control of the government and the future of the country. However, our intelligence and the security forces have been working round the clock in identifying the



members of this dark network within different state organs. As a matter of fact, before the coup attempt 40 000 people – including hundreds of army officers, even some generals who are members of this group – were identified thanks to deciphering an encrypted software that FETO members were using to communicate with each other. Learning that they were identified, the putschists hastily executed their coup plans and tried to overthrow the government. Were it not for the resilience and strong will of Turkish people, the democratic system would be abolished serving the purpose of FETO and its chieftain.

Turkey has already been carrying out a fight against threats from terrorist organisations like DAESH, PKK. In addition to those threats, FETO poses a unique danger to the democratic foundation of the Republic. For decades, with great secrecy, its followers infiltrated the vital institutions of the government. On the evening of July 15, they targeted people with the weapons that were given to them to protect the very same people. Indeed, July 15 was a traumatic experience for the society because we did not expect anyone within the prestigious Turkish Armed Forces would betray their oath and country. This group within the army

constituted 1.5 percent of the Turkish Armed Forces

The coup attempt and the nature of the threat posed by FETO required government to declare a state of emergency in accordance with the 120th article of the constitution. Although the law gives the government a right to declare a state of emergency for up to six months, the government plans to end it in less than three months. As part of the investigation of the coup attempt so far, 16 000 people have been arrested. The coup plotters will be tried transparently in accordance with the law.

While investigations continue, the government and the country has gone back to normal. On August 3, The New York Times published an article with the title “A Coup, Terrorists and Inflation, Yet Investors Rush to Turkey” explaining how Turkey maintains its attractive status to investors. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu realised a planned visit to Pakistan on August 1-2 and Qatari Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al-Thani visited Turkey on 30 July to discuss the developments after the coup attempt as well as issues related to bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu received more than 60 telephone calls from his counterparts around the world after

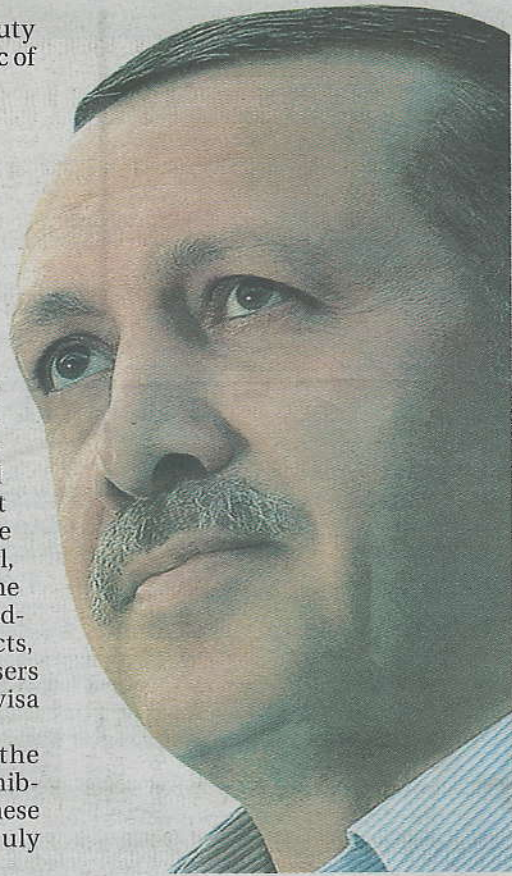
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the failed coup attempt. The Deputy Foreign Minister of People's Republic of China Zhang Ming, State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office of Germany Markus Ederer, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland visited Turkey to demonstrate their solidarity with Turkey.

On August 9, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Russia to meet with President Putin in an effort to normalise relations between the two countries after a fighter jet incident in November 2015. During the visit, President Erdoğan said that Turkey and Russia will take the necessary joint steps one by one in order to revive the High Level Cooperation Council, relaunch charter flights, remove the restrictions on bilateral trade including the trade of agricultural products, clear the way for Turkish enterprisers in Russia and fully reintroduce the visa exemption.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Namibian government and our Namibian friends for standing with us in these difficult times. Your support is truly appreciated.

***Deniz Çakar is the Turkish ambassador to Namibia**



< Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan