**Note to the Press on the occasion of 18 March Martyr's Day**

Since the 1970s, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has lost 40 members in the attacks carried out by terrorist organizations such as the Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide (JCAG), the Armenian Revolutionary Army (ARA) and 17 November.

A ceremony will be held in memory of our sacred fallen diplomats in the Foreign Ministry Cemetery at the Cebeci Asri Cemetery in Ankara at 10:30 on Saturday, March 18th, where members of our Ministry, relatives of our fallen diplomats, representatives of the diplomatic corps and citizens will be present.

The Memorial Hall of Fallen Diplomats which is in Karşıyaka, İzmir, is also included for the first time this year in the ceremonies to be held in İzmir on the occasion of the 18 March Martyr’s Day. A ceremony will be held by the Karşıyaka District Office and İzmir Representative Office at 10.30 on March 18th. On the same day, a luncheon will be hosted for the relatives of our fallen diplomats by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spouses' Solidarity Association.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Turkish diplomats, despite all the threats, carried out their duties by risking their lives and the lives of their loved ones and never lost their commitment to their country and their duty. Unfortunately, tens of innocent people have been martyred merely because they were Turkish and represented Turkey.

The first attack targeting our diplomats and their families took place against our Consul General Mehmet Baydar and our Vice-Consul Bahadır Demir in 1973 in Los Angeles. Two years after this attack, on 22 October 1975, Ambassador Danis Tunalıgil was martyred in Vienna, and a series of ASALA-led attacks against our diplomats began. The last victim we gave to this terrorism was Evner Ergun, who served as Deputy Director at the United Nations Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs Center in Vienna, who was martyred on November 19, 1984 in a heinous attack held by ARA.

Although the ASALA, ARA and JCAG-induced terrorism has declined towards the end of the 1980s, and in the 1990s, the terrorist organization called “17 November” in Greece targeted our diplomats and the Counsellor of our Embassy in Athens, Ömer Haluk Sipahioğlu and Deputy Press Counsellor Çetin Görgü were martyred.

In the following years, in 1993, the Administrative Attaché of our Embassy in Baghdad Çağlar Yücel was martyred by the "People's Mujahideen Organization". In 2004, our Security Attachés Nihat Akbas, Bilal Urgen, Adem Çiçek, Bülent Kıranşal and Süleyman Karahasanoğlu were martyred in Mosul, and in 2013, our Security Attaché Sinan Yılmaz was martyred in Mogadishu.

Our Ministry is working hard to keep the memories of our sacred martyrs alive. We also aim to immortalize the names of our fallen diplomats in the countries where they were assassinated through monuments/plaques, marking the points where they were martyred. In this framework, we have held inaugurations of monuments/plaques in memory of our fallen diplomats in Sydney, Ottawa, The Hague, Lisbon and Vienna so far, and we are also working to hold inaugurations of monuments/plaques in other cities in which our diplomats fell martyr. In our country, a monument of fallen diplomats was inaugurated in Muğla Fethiye in 2015 with the initiative of the Fethiye Municipality; in addition, a memorial was inaugurated in İzmir Karşıyaka in 2008, in their memory.

On this occasion, we once more bow respectfully before the sacred memories of all our fallen diplomats. May they rest in peace.