



Jubilee Campaign Welcomes the US Government's Recognition of the Armenian Genocide



PRESS RELEASE 28 April 2021 Washington DC | Jubilee Campaign welcomes the US President's historic recognition of the Armenian Genocide on its remembrance day Sunday April 26th. We hope this will encourage more countries to honour the victims and surviving generations by acknowledging what took place and not giving into political pressure from Turkey. Sweden's Foreign Minister, for example, is yet to recognize the genocide.

The recognition by the White House follows two resolutions passing the House and Senate in 2019, respectively, both recognizing the Armenian Genocide and calling on the US government to formalize the recognition and remembrance of the Armenian Genocide.

Turkey has in the last years been more restrictive on religious freedom. Most notably authorities converted the ancient and historic Church of Hagia Sophia built in the 6th century into a mosque but also other religious buildings; authorities have been deporting several foreign Christian workers from Turkey; and ostracizing Christians and other religious and ethnic minorities and equating Turkishness with being a Muslim.

Turkey's violations have been so grave that the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) in April 2021 added the country to the Special Watch List, for engaging and tolerating, "systematic, ongoing, and egregious violations" of religious freedom. In addition Turkish forces and Turkish-backed militia in Northeastern Syria have been committing war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Christian and Yazidi populations there.

Responding to the recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Turkey summoned the US envoy

“In keeping silent about evil, in burying it so deep within us that no sign of it appears on the surface, we are implanting it, and it will rise up a thousand fold in the future. **When we neither punish nor reproach evildoers, we are not simply protecting their trivial old age, we are thereby ripping the foundations of justice from beneath new generations.**”

— Aleksandr I. Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago 1918–1956*

FACTS ABOUT THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE 1915-

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE 1915

The Armenian Genocide describes the actions put into place by central authorities in Turkey with the plan of eliminating the Armenian ethnic minority in Turkey. On the eve of World War I there were two million Armenians in the Ottoman Empire by 1922 there were fewer than 400 000. **Ottoman authorities killed some 1.5 million Armenians during the genocide.**

If not for the eyewitness accounts of missionaries and others living in Turkey at the time- the atrocities that took place might never have been reported.

One testimony is that of Karen Maria Petersen - a missionary from Denmark - she describes a poster placed by the Ottoman authorities in the town of Mezre, the poster read:

"Everyone regardless, if he is Christian or Muslim, who will hide an Armenian in his house, will be hanged from his house's door, and the house will be set fire and become a congeries of ash."

The main part of the genocide took place in 1915 but even after Turkish authorities were bent on removing any trace of the Armenian population in Turkey. In January 1916 another Danish missionary, Jenny Jensen, describes how Ottoman authorities took Armenian children from the German orphanage in Mezreh, where she was headmistress, allegedly to reunite them with their parents. Jenny Jensen could not believe this and when she went to investigate what happened to the children she found the charred bodies of the children with her own eyes. In reality the authorities had already murdered the parents and were just collecting the children to kill them.



Armenian refugees



Armenian woman fleeing,
Ottoman Empire 1918-20.



Camp of Armenian refugee
children in Greece.

In light of the atrocities that took place during the Armenian Genocide it is important that it is not denied. Turkey is reengaging in genocidal activities in Syria and harassing, discriminating and intimidating Christians in Turkey and need to be held accountable. Jubilee Campaign in 2019 sponsored a [joint submission on Turkey](#) during its Universal Periodic Review and submitted an [oral statement](#) at the Human Rights Council on how Turkey has been blocking access to water for religious minorities in Northeastern Syria. [The International Religious Freedom Roundtable in DC](#) has also released [numerous letters](#) calling for Turkey to be held to account for their human right rights violations and crimes against humanity in Syria and other regions. We have recently received reports of Turkey's involvement in Somalia - [providing arms and other military equipment](#) - exacerbating the existing internal conflict in the country. Turkey and Turkish-tied groups have a history of supplying military equipment to Islamic extremist groups in Africa, including in [2014](#) and [2020](#).



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