

# Will the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Entice Obama to Finally Call it Genocide?

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*As America's foremost ally on the geopolitics chessboard bridging Europe, the Middle East and Asia, both Turkey and President Obama are coming under increasing pressure as the 24<sup>th</sup> of April, 2015 approaches marking the official 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Armenian genocide. Twenty-two nations that include most all of South America, much of Europe, Russia, Canada and all but six US states have already officially recognized the Armenian genocide. [Greece, Cyprus and Switzerland](#) have even made it a crime in their countries to deny the Armenian genocide.*

Last Sunday [Pope Francis](#) called the slaughter of Armenians by the Ottoman Empire “the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century,” urging the entire international community of nations to follow suit in officially recognizing it as such. Possessing a sense of admiration toward the Armenian people, the pope acknowledged Armenia as the very first nation state to declare Christianity as its state religion way back in 301 AD. The [Armenians trace their roots](#) back to Noah's great great grandson Haik, declaring him their ancient Armenian patriarch. Legendary stories abound even to this day of Noah's ark still lodged amidst the icy slopes of Mount Ararat located just inside the Turkish border with Armenia. Archeological expeditions have been outlawed in recent decades by Islamic Turkey, unwilling to risk enabling Armenians' to reclaim their ancient Christian past with any substantial scientific verification.

Italian journalist and author [Franca Giansoldati](#) was recently interviewed about her new book entitled *The March without Return: The Armenian Genocide*. Stressing why it's so overdue and important to recognize the last century's first genocide, she states:

... Those million and a half persons did not die of cold. Sometimes the statistics become cold, but let's try to put before our eyes a million and a half faces of children, of raped women, of mothers who overwhelmed threw their children into the rivers because they couldn't see them die of hunger anymore. Let's try to imagine this infinite cruelty... perhaps a trembling comes to one's conscience.

In spite of the recent trend of more nations recognizing the Armenian genocide, still holding out in official denial remain just two Muslim nations, the guilty genocidal perpetrator Turkey that borders Armenia to the west and its cohort Armenian hater Azerbaijan that borders to the east. As the nation that last fought and lost a costly war against Armenia just over two decades ago, to this day Azerbaijan engages in near daily violent skirmishes with the Armenian military over the disputed lost [territory Nagorno-Karabakh](#). After the 1994 ceasefire, hundreds have been killed on both sides in raids and shootouts, which have substantially increased since last summer.

In the West's constant war drumming [rush towards World War III](#) against nations of the East Russia and China, having aligned with its powerful regional neighbor Russia, Armenia lies squarely in the US Empire's crosshairs. The Empire's longtime imperialistic agenda has been to weaken Russia's regional prowess and influence over its bordering neighbors Armenia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and eroding their [Eurasian Economic Union](#). A recent visit to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in February by neocon regime changer herself [Victoria Nuland](#) (instrumental in 2014's Ukraine coup) drew speculation she was merely marking off territory as her next victim(s).

Pope Francis is not the first Vatican leader to speak out as back in 2000 the then popular [Pope John Paul II](#) co-wrote with the Armenian Church patriarch that "the Armenian genocide, which began the century, was a prologue to horrors that would follow." Even back when it began in 1915, then Pope Benedict XV wrote two letters to the Turkish figurehead of the Ottoman throne Sultan Mohammed V to stop the violence but to no avail. But the genocidal-minded Young Turks party had gained control over the Ottoman Empire government, bent on executing their ambitious plan to exterminate all Armenians.

After the current pope's condemnation of Turkey for its continued denial last Sunday, the Turkish government retaliated immediately by [recalling its ambassador](#) to the Vatican and issuing a stern statement calling the pope's claims inflammatory, unfounded and spreading hatred. In response to the pope's allegations, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted, "The pope's statement, which is far from historic and legal truths, is unacceptable. Religious positions are not places where unfounded claims are made and hatred is stirred."

Despite virtually a unanimous worldwide consensus of historians in agreement that during the First World War and beyond the Turks massacred up to a million and a half Armenians in the century's first genocide, the Turkish government still insists that no genocide occurred, maintaining that the death toll is an inflated false count and that not just Armenians suffered and perished but also Turks, Assyrians and Greeks lost their lives during what Turkey refers to as mere civil war unrest within the larger world war. The Turks maintain that up to half million Turks also died, equaling the number of [admitted Armenian casualties](#) during the "civil strife" that brought the Ottoman Empire to its bloody end.

With the Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and prominent Armenian church leaders attending the St. Peter's Basilica Mass on the first Sunday after Easter, Pope Francis chose the occasion to honor the innocent men, women and children who were "senselessly" murdered by the Ottoman Turks, believing it was his moral duty to call out Turkey for its continual denial. [Francis asserted](#), "Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it." The pope cited similar massacres still ongoing today with the beheadings of Christians in Iraq and Syria (including Armenians living in and near Aleppo, Syria) by the US-Israel-Turkey's secret ally and fake enemy the Islamic State. In the strongest words yet by a pope, the leader of one billion Catholics around the world is urging the entire international community to openly accept the killing of up to 75% of all Armenians at the time as a genocide.

Hearing Pope Francis' heartfelt convictions on their behalf last Sunday, many Armenians attending the mass were [moved to tears](#). The head of the Armenian Apostolic Church Aram I who was present at basilica expressed gratitude for Francis' clear condemnation and called the Armenian genocide a crime against humanity that warrants reparation. Though Armenian President Sargsyan acknowledged the reparation issue, he said "for our people,

the primary issue is universal recognition of the Armenian genocide, including recognition by Turkey.” Sargsyan rejected past feeble offers from Ankara calling for joint research looking into the historic matter, stating emphatically that scholars and commissions alike have collected overwhelming, irrefutable proof that the Turks committed genocide against Armenians.

Defined by the United Nations Convention in 1948 as “deliberate killing and other acts intended to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group,” aside from Turkey there are still other nations that have balked at actually classifying the Armenian deaths a genocide. For instance, to this day the United States nor Obama have called the spade a spade, dancing around the issue by placing geopolitics of Turkey’s significant global location more important than honesty and moral principle. Obama’s succumbed to Turkey’s relentless pressure [lobbying other nations with millions](#) in bribes to prevent official recognition of the Armenian deaths as genocide.

Every April in years past Armenian Americans have advocated for Obama to step up to the plate and finally do what’s right. Among the mounting pile of broken promises Obama has never kept while he campaigned for president was [his vow to use the word “genocide”](#) to acknowledge the annual April day of recognition. But with two key US military bases located inside strategic NATO member Turkey’s borders, global Empire dominance necessitates that virtually every US president submit to Turkish pressures to remain silent.

As a senator and presidential candidate back in 2008, [Obama righteously admonished then Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice](#) for recalling US Ambassador to Armenia for daring to use the g-word:

The Armenian genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence. The facts are undeniable. An official policy that calls on diplomats to distort the historical facts is an untenable policy.

Yet since becoming president every year geopolitics and Empire hegemony win out over personal honor and integrity that conveniently never fail to take a shameful backseat. But this year the president’s under the most heat ever with the genocidal centenary next week. Even the [Los Angeles Times](#) is optimistic, “It is also a period of the Obama presidency, its twilight, in which the president has shown a greater boldness on core issues of principle as he begins to consider his legacy.”

Don’t hold your breath waiting for the same president who once also promised that he would be the most open and transparent president in US history to ever embrace and uphold ethics over politics. Funny how both the current Secretary of State and Vice President when they were senators likewise were all boldly principled in calling it Armenian genocide. But like their spineless boss, every April 24th, they too lost their previously held “strong moral compass.” As they say, power has a way of corrupting a once moral compass from all sense of righteous direction.

Meanwhile, a fellow Democrat in DC representing Glendale, California – the one US city with the [highest concentration of Armenians](#) at near half the population of 200,000 – Congressman Adam Schiff is sponsoring a US congressional resolution finally recognizing last century’s mass killings officially a genocide. He stated that he hopes the pope’s strong

sentiments “inspire our president and Congress to demonstrate a like commitment to speaking the truth about the Armenian genocide and to renounce Turkey’s campaign of concealment and denial.”

On Wednesday the European Union parliament weighed in on the issue, releasing a proclamation also pushing for Turkey to recognize the Armenian genocide for what it really is as a giant redemptive step toward “a genuine reconciliation” between Turkey and Armenia. But holdouts to the end, even prior to the EU’s vote on the resolution, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the EU’s decision in Brussels would not change his country’s official position of denial.

The [EU resolution](#) calls for both nations to ratify:

*The protocols on the establishment of diplomatic relations, opening the border as well as improve their relations, with particular reference to cross-border cooperation and economic integration.*

*Sounds like more wishful thinking for Turkey and Obama to actually do the right thing. As further encouragement, the EU acknowledged last year’s April 23rd [offer of condolences](#) and recognition of atrocities by Turkish President as a much needed initial step in the right direction.*

A couple months ago a Turkish member of parliament, Kurdish politician [Ahmet Turk](#) publicly apologized to Armenians, admitting that “our grandfathers have blood on their hands,” and calling for his government to do the same.

Two famous half Armenian American women from the entertainment industry have publicly supported the Armenian cause. Thirteen months ago [Cher joined the Save Kessab](#) campaign to generate international support for the northern Syrian town populated by Armenian Christians. Both Cher and Kim Kardashian have sought to bring awareness to the plight of Christians in war torn Iraq and Syria who have become victims persecuted and murdered by US backed brutal Islamic State extremists. Cher also assisted Armenians after the 1988 earthquake that ravaged the Soviet outer state just prior to its 1991 independence. After attending the Armenian Genocide Memorial in Yerevan, as an activist last Sunday [Kim met with Armenia’s Prime Minister](#) Hovik Abrahamyan to discuss this year’s 100<sup>th</sup> Remembrance Day.

One may naively wonder what the big deal is about, attaching such significance to tragic events that happened a whole century ago and the importance of Turkey and world leaders today acknowledging the atrocities with the word “genocide” to describe them. The answer lies in the world apparently already forgetting the Armenian genocide barely a decade and a half after it ended when [Adolf Hitler](#) uttered to Reich Marshall Hermann Goering on the eve of the Polish invasion and start of World War II, “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”

Three out of four of all Armenians were wiped off the face of the earth in a matter of a few years, starting on April 24<sup>th</sup>, 1915 with the roundup in Constantinople of all the Armenian intellectuals, professionals, editors and religious leaders who were summarily executed. Many Armenian victims were savagely slaughtered by Ottoman Turks or died of starvation during their forced deportation en route to the Syrian desert. Only a half million Armenians

survived, forced to flee into Russia, the United States, other Middle Eastern countries and every continent in a vast [Armenian diaspora](#) estimated currently to be a little more than 10 million, 7 million more than live in Armenia itself.

Some 60,000 Armenians remain in Turkey today, mostly in the Istanbul metropolis. However, during the genocide thousands of mostly [Armenian children were assimilated and Islamized](#) into the Kurdish culture within southeastern Turkey. As Moslems they interbred with Kurds and fearing further persecution, the tens of thousands still living in Kurdish Turkey today have been unable to openly embrace their Armenian roots.

Every Armenian on the planet regardless of location has family lineage linked to the Armenian genocide. The emotional significance attached to formally recognizing the genocide a century ago has everything to do with honoring our parents, grandparents and great grandparents who were directly impacted and suffered lifelong trauma from the egregious atrocities. There is especially a sense of urgency on this 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary to acknowledge as a genocide those long ago sad events before the very last of the genocide survivors die off. Very few are still alive today.

My father died a year and a half ago as a centenarian who lived on this earth for one century, one month, one week and one day as an Armenian genocide survivor. As the youngest member of his family, he was the only American born Hagopian living in Springfield, Massachusetts in 1913. His parents and four older brothers and sisters all arrived from eastern Armenia just four years prior to the genocide back in their homeland. My father's earliest recollections were hearing about the horrible fate befalling his family relatives back in the old country.

The importance of honestly calling the genocide what it is and was pays tribute to our ancestors, and remembering that their lives still matter to us keeps alive our scared bond and connection to them as our Armenian descendants. This is what it means to be Armenian in 2015. Let us never forget. But most of all, let us eradicate the scourge of genocide that unfortunately [still grips the planet even today](#) in places like eastern Ukraine, Gaza, Iraq, Somalia, the Central African Republic, Nigeria and Myanmar. And as long as we're at it, true evolutionary progress of the human species can come only after all wars are abolished and both humans and nations have finally learned to resolve conflict through peaceful means.

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