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Guest Editorial

Genocide: Turkey's Dark 'Secret' Resonating The Airwaves

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Los Angeles (AINA) -- With the world's attention focused on the battlegrounds of Belgium and France, under the protective mask of WWI, the systematic extermination of Assyrians, Pontic Greeks and Armenians in Ottoman Turkey was carried out by Sultan Abdul-Hamid II, and the Young Turks, Enver Pasha, Talaat Pasha, and Djemal Pasha, the hallmark of the first Genocide of the 20th century.

Today in Turkey, openly discussing or writing about genocide and holocaust carries a heavy punishment including imprisonment. The fear instilled in Turkish society is implemented in an effort to conceal a nearly century-old dark chapter in its Ottoman past.



While freedom of speech and uncensored dialog about these genocides are heavily suppressed, the dialog is now slowly unfolding elsewhere in the democratic free world and the west. Just last week one such dialog was broadcast via the airwaves of Australia's National Radio.

I was invited by a producer of Turkish descent to speak about the Assyrians and the Assyrian Genocide on the program Triple J, the National Youth Network of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

As an Assyrian, I found it very encouraging to have received an invitation from a Turkish producer to speak about a subject that is virtually taboo and unlawful in her own country.

But as I suspected, in no time the inevitable occurred.

In what is becoming a predictable and common behavior (AINA [10-30-2007](#), [11-20-2007](#)), Turkish hackers once again attacked my book's website. This latest incident trailed on the heels of last week's radio broadcast. This is the fifth such attack on the website of *The Crimson Field*, a book I wrote about the Assyrian Genocide.

If the string of assaults in the past several months by Turkish hackers against Assyrian websites, including that of the Assyrian Academic Society, is meant to intimidate Assyrians from speaking about the Genocide, obviously, these tactics on the part of the hackers are futile.

Today's Assyrians still carry with them memories and the wounds of those losses. And yet they are expected to remain quiet. When that expectation is not met, they encounter aggressive demands and intimidation to keep silent. The Assyrian nation will never remain silent.

Terrorization and bullying will not keep a nation silent when two out of every three Assyrians were murdered in the genocide and mass ethnic cleansing orchestrated by the Ottoman government in the early part of the 20th century.

What I find inexcusable is when decent members of society, irrespective of ethnicity, remain complacent with a do-nothing attitude, contributing to the cycle of fanaticism and odium in regards to the question of the Assyrian Genocides of not only last century, but also the ongoing violence towards that nation particularly in Iraq since the beginning of the 2003 war.

Rosie Malek-Yonan is an Assyrian actor, director and author of [The Crimson Field](#). She is an outspoken advocate of issues concerning Assyrians, in particular bringing attention to the Assyrian Genocide and the plight of today's Assyrians in Iraq since the U.S. lead invasion of Iraq in 2003. On June 30, 2006, she was invited to [testify](#) on Capitol Hill regarding the genocide and persecution of Assyrians in Iraq by Kurds and Islamists. She is on the Board of Advisors at [Seyfo Center](#) in Holland that exclusively deals with the Assyrian Genocide issue. She has acted opposite many of Hollywood's leading actors and has received rave reviews both as an actor and director. Most recently, she played the role of Nuru Il-Ebrahim, opposite Reese Whitherspoon in New Line Cinema's "Rendition", directed by Oscar winning director Gavin Hood,

which will be released in 2007.

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