



International Genocide Scholars Association Officially Recognizes Assyrian, Greek Genocides

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In a groundbreaking move, the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) has voted overwhelmingly to recognize the genocides inflicted on Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire between 1914 and 1923.

The resolution passed with the support of fully 83 percent of IAGS members who voted. The resolution (text below) declares that "it is the conviction of the International Association of Genocide Scholars that the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks." It "calls upon the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocides against these populations, to issue a formal apology, and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution."

In 1997, the IAGS officially recognized the Armenian genocide. The current resolution notes that while activist and scholarly efforts have resulted in widespread acceptance of the Armenian genocide, there has been "little recognition of the qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire." Assyrians, along with Pontian and Anatolian Greeks, were killed on a scale equivalent in per capita terms to the catastrophe inflicted on the Armenian population of the empire -- and by much the same methods, including mass executions, death marches, and starvation.

IAGS member Adam Jones drafted the resolution, and lobbied for it along with fellow member Thea Halo, whose mother Sano survived the Pontian Greek genocide. In an address to the membership at the IAGS conference in Sarajevo, Bosnia, in July 2007, Jones paid tribute to the efforts of "representatives of the Greek and Assyrian communities ... to publicize and call on the present Turkish government to acknowledge the genocides inflicted on their populations," which had made Asia Minor their home for millennia. The umbrella term "Assyrians" includes Chaldeans, Nestorians, Syriacs, Aramaens, Eastern Orthodox Syrians, and Jacobites.

"The overwhelming backing given to this resolution by the world's leading genocide scholars organization will help to raise consciousness about the Assyrian and Greek genocides," Jones said on December 15. "It will also act as a powerful counter to those, especially in present-day Turkey, who still ignore or deny outright the genocides of the Ottoman Christian minorities."

The resolution stated that "the denial of genocide is widely recognized as the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides." The Assyrian population of Iraq, for example, remains highly vulnerable to genocidal attack. Since 2003, Iraqi Assyrians have been exposed to severe persecution and "ethnic cleansing"; it is believed that up to half the Assyrian population has fled the country.

Extensive supporting documentation for the Assyrian and Greek genocides was circulated to IAGS members in the months prior to the vote, and is available at http://www.genocidetext.net/iags_resolution_supporting_documentation.htm. IAGS President Gregory Stanton may be contacted at iagspresident@aol.com.

Full Text Of The Iags Resolution:

WHEREAS the denial of genocide is widely recognized as the final stage of genocide, enshrining impunity for the perpetrators of genocide, and demonstrably paving the way for future genocides;

WHEREAS the Ottoman genocide against minority populations during and following the First World War is usually depicted as a genocide against Armenians alone, with little recognition of the qualitatively similar genocides against other Christian minorities of the Ottoman Empire;

BE IT RESOLVED that it is the conviction of the International Association of Genocide Scholars that the Ottoman campaign against Christian minorities of the Empire between 1914 and 1923 constituted a genocide against Armenians, Assyrians, and Pontian and Anatolian Greeks.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Association calls upon the government of Turkey to acknowledge the genocides against these populations, to issue a formal apology, and to take prompt and meaningful steps toward restitution.

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