

Press Release

GENOCIDE SCHOLARS ASSOCIATION OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES ASSYRIAN, GREEK GENOCIDES

Issuing Organization: International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS)

Date: December 16, 2007

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 over eighty percent of IAGS members who voted. The resolution (full 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."

"This resolution," stated IAGS President Gregory Stanton. "is one more repudiation by the world's leading genocide scholars of the Turkish government's ninety year denial of the Ottoman Empire's genocides against its Christian populations, including Assyrians, Greeks, and Armenians. The history of these genocides is clear, and there is no more excuse for the current Turkish government, which did not itself commit the crimes, to deny the facts. The current German government has forthrightly acknowledged the facts of the Holocaust. The Turkish government should learn from the German government's exemplary acknowledgment of Germany's past, so that Turkey can move forward to reconciliation with its neighbors."

The resolution noted 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. In 1997, the IAGS officially recognized the Armenian genocide.

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."

"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 10. "It will also act as a powerful counter to those, especially in present-day

Turkey, who still ignore or deny 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 ahead of the vote, and is available at

http://www.genocidertext.net/iags_resolution_supporting_documentation.htm.

For further information, please contact:

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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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