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“The Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire”



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Mariam Harutyunyan

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	5-6
Introduction	7-8
1.Term of Genocide.....	9-12
1.1. Armenian Genocide and the international law.....	13-16
2.Causes of Armenian Genocide.....	17-22
3.The Armenian Genocide 1915.....	23-40
4.The consequences of the Genocide.....	41-45
5.International recognition of the Armenian Genocide.....	46-51
Conclusion	52-56
Bibliography.....	57-61

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Mariam Harutyunyan

ABSTRACT

Genocide forgotten is Genocide repeated.

This thesis is about the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire. Here I shall try to give an answer of what is Genocide, what is the difference between Genocide and other mass murders, when the term Genocide was invented, causes of the Armenian genocide.

The thesis consists of introduction, five chapters, conclusion and references. In each chapter I have tried to give an answer to some aspect of the Armenian Genocide. This thesis will present if and how the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (that came into the force more than 30 years later) could be applied to the Armenian Genocide. In the second chapter will be explained what are the causes of Armenian Genocide. Did it start on April 24, 1915 or before, long ago the Young Turks came to power? Why Armenian population was targeted? What was/is the response of the great powers, international community. What is the official position of the Republic of Turkey? How is Turkish society responding? What are the consequences of the Genocide? Identity question.

It must be said that the consequences of genocide persist today. Survivors and their descendants remain affected by the events. The absence of formal recognition gives genocide its continuity and its present relevance. One of the most tragic consequences is a white genocide that like the Damoclean sword hangs over the head of the Armenian Diaspora.

The question of identity still weighs heavily, too. The Armenian church is one of Christianity's oldest and historically, Armenians are almost exclusively Christian. But to escape persecution in 1915 and afterward, many ethnic Armenians converted to Islam and began living as Turks.

For the new genocides not to take place, it must be condemned and punished regardless of when they occurred.

In writing this thesis, I used many books, articles, web pages. I would like to underline some books which helped me more in my research.

First one is the book by Raymond Kévorkian- The Armenian Genocide- A Complete History. Here I found lots of information about the genocide.

Second is the book by Taner Akcam- The Young Turks crime against humanity. The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire. This book is very important, because the author not only speaks about genocide, explaining what happened during that period of time, but

bring lots of documents from the Ottoman (Turkish) archives, lots of evidence proving that what happened to Armenians was planned by the Ottoman Government.

In the book written by Wolfgang Gust-The Armenian Genocide. Evidence from the German foreign office archives 1915-1916, we can find valuable information from German diplomats, military workers. The importance of this book is even priceless as during the World War I Turks were German allies.

Introduction

. . . the Armenian massacre was the greatest crime of the war, and the failure to act against Turkey is to condone it . . . the failure to deal radically with the Turkish horror means that all talk of guaranteeing the future peace of the world is mischievous nonsense.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

May 11, 1918, letter to Cleveland Hoadley Dodge

From the moment I chose this subject for my master thesis, I knew that it's going to be very interesting, but complicated. But I couldn't even imagine that with every story about Turkish (or Kurdish) atrocities, with every testimony of the survivors I read, with every photo or video about the Armenian Genocide I will again and again see the same horrible pictures in front of my eyes. I couldn't imagine that it would be so hard for me emotionally. Nevertheless, I am full of determination to further explore this topic since there are so many things about the Armenian Genocide that are not covered at all or covered partly (the faith of Armenian women, the Islamized Armenians, the question of abandoned Armenian property).

Genocide is a crime under international law even if it is not a crime in the country where it takes place, and incitements to commit genocide is also a crime. The 20th century saw several instances of genocide (the Holocaust, the Tutsis of Rwanda, Cambodia). However, these were all preceded by the Ottoman Turkish extermination of the Armenians, the first Genocide of the 20th century. The world witnessed the first genocide of the twentieth century in Anatolia. It remains to this day an extremely complicated issue with many layers and the subject of great historic contention between those who consider it genocide and those who deny it such status. The U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman empire, Morgenthau, states that "the conditions of the war gave to the Turkish Government its longed-for opportunity to lay hold of the Armenians."¹

Between 1915 and 1922 the Ottoman Empire carried out a policy to eliminate its Christian Armenian population. By 1923 Armenians had been disrooted from their historic homeland.

As David Fromkin put it in his history of World War I and its aftermath, "A Peace to End All Peace": "Rape and beating were commonplace. Those who were not killed at once were driven

¹ Vahakn N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflicts from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, 6th ed. (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 1995), p. 207.

through mountains and deserts without food, drink or shelter. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians eventually succumbed or were killed."²

As was mentioned in the first chapter, the first international reaction to the violence resulted in a joint statement by France, Russia and Great Britain, in May 1915, where the Turkish atrocities directed against the Armenian people was defined as "new crime against humanity and civilization" agreeing that the Turkish government must be punished for committing such crimes.³ Several senior Ottoman officials were put on trial in Turkey in 1919-20 in connection with the atrocities. The Young Turks' top triumvirate - the "Three Pashas" - had already fled abroad. They were sentenced to death in absentia.

Nevertheless, despite all the evidence, Turkey continues to deny genocide committed by the Ottoman Empire. And we can say that it is the last phase of the genocide, it appeared with the total and utter denial by Turkish government of the mass killings and elimination of the Armenian nation on its ancient homeland. Turkey has and is consistently foughting the acceptance of the Armenian Genocide by any means, including falsification of historical facts, propaganda campaigns, lobbying, etc (*the government of Turkey even has channeled funds into a supposedly objective research institute in the United States, which in turn paid the salary of a historian who served that government in its campaign to discredit scholarship on the Armenian genocide*).⁴ Despite this the Armenian Genocide is internationally recognized.

But even, 104 years later, the scars left by the assaults can still be seen and felt. That being said, one could also argue that the horrors of 1915 have unified and united the Armenian diaspora, and led to a cultural, religious, and ethnic pride as strong as any in the world. The Armenian people were forged in the fire of genocide, but have passed that test and prevailed with flying colors. There are now more than twice as many ethnic Armenians worldwide as there were when the Young Turks attempted to annihilate them, which is a testament to the Armenian spirit and resilience.

² John Kifner, "Armenian Genocide of 1915: An Overview", *The New York Times* (no date available), https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/ref/timestopics/topics_armeniangenocide.html?mcubz=1, (accessed on September 1, 2019).

³"Genocide of Armenians in Ottoman Empire", *The President of the Republic of Armenia*, (no date available), <http://www.president.am/en/genocide/>, (accessed on September 1, 2019).

⁴Eric Markusen, Roger W. Smith, Robert Jay Lifton, "Professional Ethics and The Denial of Armenian Genocide", *Pen America, The Freedom to Write*, April 23, 2015, <https://pen.org/professional-ethics-and-the-denial-of-armenian-genocide/>, (accessed on September 2, 2019).

1. Term of Genocide

Genocide is not a phenomenon of 20th century. History witnessed lots of instances of mass killings, numerous cases of genocidal violence.

But only in 1944 Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin created the term "genocide". In his 1944 study "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe" Lemkin proposed that the term genocide should be employed to describe "the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group". He presented a draft resolution for a Genocide Convention treaty to a number of countries, in an effort to persuade them to sponsor the resolution. The resolution was placed before the General Assembly for consideration with the support of the United States. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was formally presented and adopted on December 9, 1948.

And in 1946 Genocide was first recognized as a crime under international law in 1946 by the United Nations General Assembly (A/RES/96-I). It was codified as an independent crime in the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (the Genocide Convention).⁵

UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide defines genocide as-

..any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The preamble of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (CPPCG) states that "genocide is a crime under international law, contrary to the spirit and aims of the United Nations and condemned by the civilized world" and that "at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity".⁶

⁵ United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, "Genocide: Background", <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml>, (accessed on September 2, 2019).

⁶ United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner, "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide", <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx>, (accessed on September 2, 2019).

The CPPCG was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1948 and came into effect on 12 January 1951. It contains an internationally recognized definition of genocide which has been incorporated into the national criminal legislation of many countries, and was also adopted by the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which established the International Criminal Court.

The international law on the crime of genocide began to be enforced only in the 1990s. Today the UN Genocide Convention counts 152 member states. This means that approximately 50 states have not yet ratified the Genocide Convention.

The very term 'Genocide' was invented by Raphael Lemkin, a Polish criminal and international law specialist in 1944. Lemkin had managed to escape the Holocaust via Sweden before reaching the United States where he published *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, a detailed account of the occupation regime imposed by Nazi Germany during WWII. R. Lemkin combined the Greek word "geno", for race or tribe and the Latin word "cide", for killing and created the word genocide. It has been applied to the Holocaust and many other mass killings including the Armenian Genocide, the Greek Genocide, the Assyrian Genocide, the Darfur Genocide, the Rwandan Genocide.

Genocide according to Lemkin: In this book, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin introduced the concept of genocide, defining it as: "the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group [...] a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group."⁷

In 1945, when the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg condemned Nazi officials for crimes against humanity, the word "genocide" was included in the verdict but as a descriptive and not a legal term.

When R. Lemkin coined the word genocide he cited the 1915 annihilation of Armenians as an example of genocide and later to the mass murders in Nazi-controlled Europe. He dedicated his

⁷ Martin Mennecke, "The Crime of Genocide and International Law", in: B. Boender - W. ten Have (Eds.), *The Holocaust and other Genocides*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012, pp. 145-162.

life to mobilizing the international community, to work together to prevent the occurrence of such events. Lemkin's interest in prosecuting the perpetrators was sparked when he first learned about the genocide during his studies at University of Lwów. In his autobiography Lemkin wrote that he had been influenced by the March 15, 1921 assassination of Talaat Pasha:

“Then one day I read in the newspapers that all Turkish war criminals were to be released... The Turkish criminals released from Malta dispersed all over the world. The most frightful among them was Talaat Pasha, the minister of the interior of Turkey, who was identified with the destruction of the Armenian people... One day he was stopped in the street by a young Armenian with the name Tehlirian. After identifying Talaat Pasha, Tehlirian shot him saying, "This is for my mother."⁸

This event became a topic of discussion for Lemkin during his studies on the topic of sovereignty at Lwów: "Sovereignty... 'cannot be conceived as the right to kill millions of people." The murder of Talaat Pasha and trial of Tehlirian prompted Lemkin's future path. Lemkin wrote: "At that moment, my worries about the murder of the innocent became more meaningful to me. I didn't know all the answers but I felt that a law against this type of racial or religious murder must be adopted by the world."⁹

In a 1949 interview, Lemkin said "I became interested in genocide because it happened so many times. It happened to the Armenians, then after the Armenians, Hitler took action."¹⁰

Various terms, including "massacre", "crimes against humanity", and "extermination" were used to describe intentional, systematic killings before 1944. For example in 1941, Winston Churchill, when describing the German invasion of the Soviet Union, spoke of "a crime without a name".¹¹ Thus Raphael Lemkin didn't invent the crime of genocide, but only created a term describing one of the international crimes against humanity and separating it from the other crimes.

Term genocide became part of international law in the mid-1940s, after the end of World War II, and really around the time of the Nuremberg trials. The basic difference between crimes against humanity, extermination and genocide is as follows: Crimes against humanity focuses on the killing of large numbers of individuals. The systematic, mass killing of a very large number of

⁸ "Raphael Lemkin", https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raphael_Lemkin#cite_note-:0-32, Wikipedia, (accessed on September 5, 2019).

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰ Alessandra Stanley, "A PBS Documentary Makes Its Case for the Armenian Genocide, With or Without a Debate", *The New York Times*, April 17, 2006, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/17/arts/television/a-pbs-documentary-makes-its-case-for-the-armenian-genocide.html>, (accessed on September 5, 2019).

¹¹"Winston Churchill: Broadcast regarding his meeting with Roosevelt, August 24, 1941", *Jewish Virtual Library*, (no date available), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/churchill-broadcast-regarding-his-meeting-with-roosevelt-august-1941>, (accessed on September 5, 2019).

individuals will constitute a crime against humanity. Genocide has a different focus. It is distinguishable from all other crimes by the motivation behind it. Genocide is a conspiracy aimed at the total destruction of a group and thus requires a concerted plan of action. It focuses not on the killing of individuals, but on the destruction of groups, a plan, intend to destroy.

Genocide stands apart from other crimes because genocide is the intention to destroy a specific population because, and only because, they belong to that particular group.

Criticism: The UN treaty has been under harsh criticism since its adoption, mostly by people frustrated with the difficulty of applying it to specific cases. They argue that the definition is too narrow. Others say the term is devalued by misuse. Some analysts claim that the definition is so narrow that none of the mass killings perpetrated since the treaty's adoption would fall under it.

1.1 Armenian Genocide and the international law: Under the international law Genocide is one the most serious crimes, the purpose of which is the systematic destruction of all or a large part of a specific group (racial, ethnic, religious or national). It excludes the fundamental and natural right of a group of people - the right to life.

Here I will try to explain if and how the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (that came into the force more than 30 years later) could be applied to the Armenian Genocide.

Today denialists of the Armenian Genocide, clearly understanding the weakness of the historical counterclaims, try to focus on the legal level. The main argument is that Armenian massacres cannot be qualified as genocide, because there was no concept of genocide during its implementation and its punishment was formed only by the Genocide Convention (30 years after the famous events). These people justify their arguments by the famous legal principle- 'the law has no retroactive force' and that the Genocide Convention can not cover the events before it comes into force. Of course above mentioned principle is true, but it is worth to note that one of the main legal sources of the international public law is international custom,¹² which is non-written form of law and for its existence acceptance of the practice as obligatory ('*opinio juris sive necessitatis*') is required. Here we should mention the Joint Declaration of France, Great Britain and Russia made on May 24, 1915 which is an explicit evidence of the existence of "Opinio juris" during the commission of the crime and has a special importance.

The Declaration is the following: "For about a month the Kurd and Turkish population of Armenia has been massacring Armenians with the connivance and often assistance of Ottoman

¹² International Court of Justice, Statute of the International Court of Justice, Article 38, <https://www.icj-cij.org/en/statute>, (accessed on September 5, 2019).

authorities. Such massacres took place in middle April (new style) at Erzerum, Dertchun, Eguine, Akn, Bitlis, Mush, Sassun, Zeitun, and throughout Cilicia. Population of about one hundred villages near Van were all murdered. At the same time in Constantinople Ottoman Government ill-treats inoffensive Armenian population.

In view of those new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied governments announce publicly to the Sublime-Porte that they will hold personally responsible [for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres."¹³

The above mentioned declaration was important on several reasons. First, it stood as the first "official" appearance of the concept of crime against humanity at the international level, which would be confirmed decades later by judges at the international tribunals for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and Rwanda (ICTR). Furthermore, the use of the word crime conveys the recognition of criminal responsibility. Though political in nature, the condemnation of the Great Powers of the time was decisive insofar as qualifying, for the first time, malevolent acts of leaders against their own nationals, outside of the context of war, as 'crimes against humanity and civilization'.

So the adoption of above mentioned declaration has crucial value- the international community, represented by the main world powers of that period of history (the winners of the World War I), confirmed that forced deportation and massacres of Armenians, organized by the Ottoman Empire, are an international crime in accordance with the international law of that time. Thus it created the legal basis for the responsibility of the Ottoman Empire and its successor Turkey for that international crime. Moreover, Turks also have admitted the fact of the crime in time: Turkish courts-martial of 1919-20 sentenced the organizers of the Armenian genocide to death finding them guilty for the policy of destruction of the Armenian people.¹⁴ In the aftermath of the World War I the newly established Ottoman government began its term with the prosecution of war criminals, those accused for misappropriation of governments funds and the perpetrators of massacres against the Armenians. However, a few trials did take place before Turkish courts martial in Istanbul, on the basis of articles 45 and 170 of the Ottoman Penal Code. Several ministers in the wartime Turkish cabinet and leaders of the Ittihad party, including the main architects of the genocide, the Young Turk leaders Talaat Pasha, Minister of the Interior, and Enver Pasha, Minister

¹³"France, Great Britain and Russia Joint Declaration, May 24, 1915", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, (no date available), <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/France.php>, (accessed on September 7, 2019).

¹⁴"Undone Nuremberg". To the 90th anniversary of the Young Turk's trial, *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*,(no date available), http://www.genocide-museum.am/arm/online_exhibition_9.php, (accessed on September 7, 2019).

of War, were tried in absentia and convicted.¹⁵ The trials provide further evidence of the various aspects of the genocide against the Armenians. The accused were found guilty in the judgment of 5 July 1919, of "the organization and execution of the crime of massacre" against the Armenian minority.¹⁶ Further trials were conducted before other Ottoman courts, partly on the basis of article 171 of the Ottoman military code concerning the offence of plunder of goods, and invoking "the sublime precepts of Islam" as well as of "humanity and civilization" to condemn "the crimes of massacre, pillage and plunder." These trials resulted in the conviction and execution of three of the perpetrators, Mehmed Kemal, county executive of Bogazhyan, Abdullah Avni, of the Erzincan gendarmerie, and Behramzade Nusret, Bayburt county executive, and District Commissioner of Ergani and Urfa (Edessa). The trials of military tribunal were conducted between 1919 and 1922 mainly in Istanbul though some were carried out in various provinces of Turkey.¹⁷

In order to evaluate the above mentioned declaration correctly, it is appropriate to compare it with the similar declaration of the winners of World War II - Soviet Union, United Kingdom and USA, which was signed during the Moscow Conference on November 1, 1943 (it became the legal and political basis for all the processes which resulted in responsibility of Germany for the "Holocaust"):

Moscow Declaration on Atrocities by President Roosevelt, Mr. Winston Churchill and Marshal Stalin, issued on November 1, 1943

The United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet Union have received from many quarters evidence of atrocities, massacres and cold-blooded mass executions which are being perpetrated by the Hitlerite forces in many of the countries they have overrun and from which they are now being steadily expelled. The brutalities of Hitlerite domination are no new thing and all people or territories in their grip have suffered from the worst form of Government by terror. What is new is that many of these territories are now being redeemed by the advancing armies of the liberating Powers and that, in their desperation, the recoiling Hitlerite Huns are redoubling their ruthless cruelties. This is now evidenced with particular clearness by the monstrous crimes of the Hitlerites on the territory of the Soviet Union which is being liberated from the Hitlerites and on French and Italian territory.

¹⁵Vahakn N. Dadrian, "Genocide as a Problem of National and International Law: The World War I Armenian Case and Its Contemporary Legal Ramifications", *Yale Journal of International Law* (Vol. 14/2) 1989, pp. 306-315.

¹⁶ William Schabas, *Genocide in International Law* (Cambridge University Press, 2nd revised edition, 2009), p. 45.

¹⁷ Vahakn N. Dadrian and Taner Akcam, *Judgment at Istanbul. The Armenian Genocide Trials* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011) p.213.

Accordingly the aforesaid three Allied Powers, speaking in the interests of the United Nations, hereby solemnly declare and give full warning of their declaration as follows: At the time of the granting of any armistice to any Government which may be set up in Germany, those German officers and men and members of the Nazi party who have been responsible for or have taken a consenting part in the above atrocities, massacres and executions will be sent back to the countries in which their abominable deeds were done in order that they may be judged and punished according to the laws of these liberated countries and of the Free Governments which will be erected therein. Lists will be compiled in all possible detail from all these countries having regard especially to the invaded parts of the Soviet Union, to Poland and Czechoslovakia, to Yugoslavia and Greece including Crete and other islands, to Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France and Italy.

Thus, Germans who take part in wholesale shootings of Italian officers or in the execution of French, Dutch, Belgian or Norwegian hostages or of Cretan peasants, or who have shared in the slaughters inflicted on the people of Poland or in the territories of the Soviet Union which are now being swept clear of the enemy, will know that they will be brought back to the scene of their crimes and judged on the spot by the peoples whom they have outraged. Let those who have hitherto not imbued their hands with innocent blood beware lest they join the ranks of the guilty, for most assuredly the three Allied Powers will pursue them to the uttermost ends of the earth and will deliver them to the accusers in order that justice may be done.

The above declaration is without prejudice to the case of the major criminals whose offences have no particular geographical location and who will be punished by a joint decision of the Governments of the Allies.¹⁸

It is very important to mention here that the Genocide Convention does not formulate a new crime, but it gives the exact term and definition of the international crime against humanity already existing in international law. We can say that The Genocide Convention is the codification of the existing international custom.

People, who insist that genocide had not been an international crime before the Genocide Convention, are questioning not only the Armenian Genocide, but also the Holocaust. In case of such viewpoint, the legality of the Nuremberg trials of 1945-1946, the responsibility of Germany for the “Holocaust” and the fact of this international crime are also questioned. Here my intention is not

¹⁸ "Moscow Declaration on atrocities" (November 1, 1943), Last updated: 03/07/2015, https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/moscow_declaration_on_atrocities_1_november_1943-en-699fc03f-19a1-47f0-aec0-73220489efcd.html, (accessed on September 8, 2019).

to compare the Armenian Genocide with the Holocaust in order to "prove" the Armenian Genocide (it was the deportations and massacres of Armenians that "inspired" Hitler "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?,"¹⁹ also in the case of the Armenian Genocide, not only more than one million Armenians were massacred, their property seized, their churches, schools destroyed, but they lost their homeland, where our ancestors lived for thousands of years, it is important to mention that in the case of the Armenian Genocide forced assimilation of the population- mainly children and younger girls took place).

The first official document which used the genocide term was the indictment represented on 18 October 1945 in Nuremberg trials.²⁰ But neither in the Nuremberg Charter, nor in the judgment was the term genocide used for the "Holocaust"; the term used was "international crime against humanity," which was used also for the Armenian genocide in 1915.

Afterwards, the term genocide was approved by Resolution 96/1 of 11 December 1946 of the UN General Assembly, the Genocide Convention and other international documents. Thus, the crime of genocide, which was involved in the term of crime against humanity, was distinguished by the Genocide Convention and gained special legal term.

The preamble of the Genocide Convention states that the convention is agreed "Recognizing that at all periods of history genocide has inflicted great losses on humanity". So it is presumed that the term genocide (not the Convention itself) is applicable also for the crimes that were committed before the Genocide Convention. At this point the UN Human Rights Committee states in one of its reports: "the word 'genocide' is a comparatively recent neologism for an old crime."²¹

Thus, forced deportation and massacres of the Armenian population committed by the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 20th century are in full compliance with the determination of the genocide crime by the Genocide Convention and contains all the elements of the offence.

¹⁹"Hitler and the Armenian Genocide", *The Genocide Education Project*, (no date available), <https://genocideeducation.org/background/hitler-and-the-armenian-genocide/>, (accessed on September 8, 2019).

²⁰ "Nuremberg Trial Proceedings - Indictment: Count Three", *Jewish Virtual Library*, (no date available), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/nuremberg-trial-proceedings-indictment-count-three>, (accessed on September 10, 2019).

²¹B . Whitaker, "Revised and updated report on the question of the prevention and punishment of the crime of genocide", United Nations Social and Economic Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Thirty-eighth session, UN. Doc. E(CN. 4) Sub. 2(1985)6, c., 2 July 1985.

2. Causes of the Genocide

Western Armenia (present-day eastern Turkey) was inhabited by Armenians for a centuries. The territory was ruled by several Armenian dynasties. Because of its favorable position the territory of Armenia faced invasions of outside powers lots of times. And beginning from the 11th century nomadic tribes of Turkic-speaking people began their invasions and migrations to the region. Thus Armenian political independence was largely brought to an end. Little by little these tribes settled in the region. In the 13th century (year 1299) the Ottoman Empire was created and in the 15-16th centuries the region was integrated into the Ottoman Empire (most of the territories that had once formed Armenian kingdoms were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire).

Armenia was divided into two parts. Western Armenia was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Armenia under the rule of Persia (after the Russian-Persian wars Eastern Armenia fell under the rule of the Russian Empire). Like other non-Turkish and non-Muslim population of the Empire, the Armenian people living in the Ottoman provinces of eastern Anatolia (Western Armenia), suffered a lot from systematic discrimination and, sometimes, from harsh persecution, Armenian villagers and townspeople often received harsh treatment from the dominant Kurdish nomads too. Because local courts and judges often favoured Muslims, Armenians (as the other Christians) had little recourse when they were the victims of violence or when their land or property was taken from them. Thanks to their distinct religious identity among the neighboring Turks and Kurds, Armenians could preserve their culture, history and language through the course of time. Christians and Jews, including Armenians, Bulgarians, Croatians, Greeks, Romanians, Serbs, and others, were classified as dhimmi (protected subject non-Muslims). The dhimmi were granted considerable religious freedom, but they were not subject to Islamic law and therefore were without equal legal standing. Codes also prohibited non-Muslims from certain professions—including service in the Ottoman army—and subjected them to additional taxes. Despite their second-class status, as the empire prospered the Armenians fared reasonably well.²²

Despite all these obstacles, throughout the existence of the Ottoman Empire Armenians hold important posts in the Empire, especially in the Ottoman government and the Ottoman economy. Even though their numbers were small compared to the whole Ottoman Armenian population, this caused some resentment among Ottoman nationalists. The rest of the common Armenians had a very

²² Facing history and ourselves, *Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization. The Genocide of the Armenians* (Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation: Inc. Brookline, Massachusetts, 2004), Chapter 2.

difficult existence because they were treated as second class citizens. One of the elite Armenians that did achieve great success was Abraham Pasha who became the Ottoman minister of State. Another man by the name of Kapriel Noradounghian became secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire. The Dadian family controlled the entire munitions industry in the Ottoman Empire. Calouste Gulbenkian became one of the main advisors of the National Bank of Turkey and the Turkish Petroleum Corporation, which later became the Iraqi Oil Corporation. Historian A.Tchamkerten writes "Armenian achievements in the Empire was not only in trade, however. They were involved in almost all economic sectors and held the highest levels of responsibility. In the 19th century, various Armenian families became the Sultan's goldsmiths, Sultan's architects and took over the currency reserves and the reserves of gold and silver, including customs duty. Sixteen of the eighteen most important bankers in the Ottoman Empire were Armenian".²³ This disparate economic development and modernization led to envy on the part of the Ottoman Turks.

During the nineteenth century, the Ottoman Empire's fortunes declined. 1877-1878 Turkish-Russian War led to the collapse of Turkish rule in the Balkans. The independence most of the Balkan countries was recognized in the Berlin Congress (1878). In 1881 France captured Tunisia, in 1882 Great Britain occupied Egypt. The Ottoman Empire was losing territories one by one. The economy stagnated, and corruption was rampant. In addition, the empire was in debt to the European powers, especially France, England, and Belgium. The conditions of Armenians and other non-Muslims became progressively more difficult. Burdened by increasing taxation and without legal means to protect themselves or their families from exploitation, the subject populations looked for a way to improve their conditions. Nationalism—the belief in a collective identity and destiny determined by membership in an ethnic, linguistic, or religious group—influenced the various groups of the empire. While the Greeks and others sought to break from the empire, Armenians were not concentrated in a single area that could easily become an independent state. They were too naive to place their hopes on promised reforms of the Ottoman administration. Armenians organized in a movement for civil rights, while waiting for the reforms to materialize. The sultan, however, responded to Armenian protests with repression and massacre. After "Hamidian massacres" some Armenian leaders began to believe that help had to come from the outside. There was a precedent for intervention on the behalf of Ottoman minorities.²⁴

²³"Armenians_in_the_Ottoman_Empire", Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>, (accessed on September 10, 2019).

²⁴ Facing history, *Crimes Against Humanity and Civilization*. Chapter 2.

From 1878 until 1881, the European powers issued collective warnings reminding the sultan and the Ottoman government of their obligations under the Treaty of Berlin. Conditions for Armenians in the empire did not improve even after the protests from the European powers. They were still subject to violent raids from local tribes. The Christians were still second-class subjects, victims of elevated taxation and unable to seek legal recourse in the courts. In an effort to keep subject nations in obedience Sultan Abdul Hamid II brutally pursued the slightest manifestation of free thought, incited national and religious hatred, provoked clashes between Muslims and Christians., enforced a policy of centralisation, which provoked feelings of radicalism and separatism. This radicalism pervaded every level of society and education. It was by decree of Abdul Hamid II that cruel Armenian pogroms were organized.

The tensions between the Ottoman government and the Armenians erupted in 1894 (the Armenians in the Sasun region refused to pay an oppressive tax), Ottoman troops and Kurdish tribesmen killed thousands of Armenians in the region. In the fall of 1895 another series of mass killings began (Ottoman authorities' suppression of an Armenian demonstration in Istanbul became a massacre). The incident was followed by a series of massacres in towns with Armenian communities that culminated in December 1895, when nearly 3,000 Armenians who had taken refuge in the cathedral of Urfa (modern Şanlıurfa) were burned alive. Hoping to call attention to their cause, Armenian revolutionaries staged another demonstration in 1896, seizing the Ottoman Bank in Istanbul. More than 5,000 Armenians were killed by mobs of Muslim Turks whose actions were apparently coordinated by government troops. In massacres between 1894 and 1896, which later came to be known as the Hamidian massacres, hundreds of thousands of Armenians were killed. The United States ('US') President Grover Cleveland, in a statement to the US Senate in 1895, said that such "fanatical brutality" against the Armenians would justify intervention by European countries, as "agents of the Christian world" to prevent "dreadful occurrences" that have "lately shocked civilizations".²⁵

Later, in 1909, 20,000 more Armenians were killed in urban riots and pogroms in Adana and Hadjin.²⁶ According to George Horton, from 1917 to 1922 a U.S. State Department Consul General in Turkey, it was actually preceded by sixteen massacres of Armenian, Greek,

²⁵Lina Laurinavičiute, Regina M. Paulose and Ronald G. Rogo, "The Forgotten: The Armenian Genocide 100 Years Later", in Morten Bergsmo, CHEAH Wui Ling and YI Ping (editors), *Historical Origins of International Criminal Law: Volume 1*, FICHL Publication Series No. 20 (2014), Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, Brussels.

²⁶Ronald Grigor Suny, "Armenian Genocide, Turkish-Armenian History", *Encyclopedia Britannica*, July 20, 1998, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Armenian-Genocide>, (accessed on September 15, 2019).

Assyrian, and Maronite Christians from 1822 to 1909, killing a total of over 358,000 men, women and children. He noted that this was only a partial list.

In the beginning of the 20th century Young Turks political movement appeared in the Ottoman Empire. Initially their goal was to carry out liberal reforms and create a Constitutional state system. In 1908 they managed to overthrow Sultan Abdul Hamid II. New laws were passed that equalized Muslims and Christians. For example, one of the laws assumed that Armenians also could serve in the army. The Armenian population was excited by these changes. But their enthusiasm didn't last long.

Besides, the constitution restored after the Revolution of 1908 promised equal rights to all citizens of the Ottoman Empire. Armenians enthusiastically embraced this opportunity, however the change of status of previously deprived Armenians increased the hostility of the Turks towards Christians. This hostility was formed long ago, as even in the conditions of deprivation Armenians of the Ottoman empire provided unprecedented social, cultural and economic development. The genocide was a means to suppress this ascent, as well as to seize the Armenian wealth created during decades.²⁷

At the beginning of the 20th century, in only two weeks, the Ottoman Empire ("sick man of Europe") lost 75% of its European territories. The fear of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire became the main element of Turkish nationalism. Thousands of Muslim refugees who fled from the Balkan states after their independence brought nationalism and religious tensions into the society, hostility towards the Christians was growing. At the same time the Young Turks began to preach the idea of pan-Turkism vehemently. Pan-Turkism was the main ideology of the Young Turks for many years.

The World War I began on July 28, 1914, and on August 2 Turkey signed a secret agreement with Germany.²⁸ One of the paragraphs of this treaty was the point that a corridor has to be created which would lead to the Muslim people of Russia. The creation of this corridor meant destruction for the Armenians living on that territories.

After Turkey entered into the war, Turkish officials began to take from the Armenians whatever they needed for warfare. Moreover, Turkish soldiers were allowed to enter Armenian shops and take everything they wanted.

²⁷"Armenian Genocide", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, (no date available), http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/armenian_genocide.php, (accessed on September 15, 2019).

²⁸"Pre-State Israel: The Ottoman Empire Enters World War I, (1914)", *Jewish Virtual Library*, (no date available), <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-ottoman-empire-enters-world-war-i-1914>, (accessed on September 17, 2019).

Meanwhile Russian army was advancing towards the Turkish borders, and there was an Armenian contingent of about 6000 people, it included Armenians from Russia, and Armenians from the Ottoman Empire who fled the country. The Young Turks saw threat to the state in the Armenians and at the same time chance form them to finish with the Armenian population. When Turkey began to lose the battles the blamed Armenians, the Armenians were portrayed as 'saboteurs' and 'pro-Russians'. The Government decided to disarm the Armenians completely.

So, summing up this chapter, we can underline several main reasons (causes) for the Armenian Genocide (European meddling in Ottoman internal affairs, nationalism, economic jealousy and Armenian involvement in the Russian war effort).

As was mentioned above, during the nineteenth century the Ottoman Empire's fortunes declined. 1877-1878 Turkish-Russian War led to the collapse of Turkish rule in the Balkans. The Empire was losing territories one by one. The remaining provinces were trying to achieve independence, and national minorities, especially Christians, are under suspicion of the authorities. Armenians were 'bone in the throat of Turks'-every time Great Powers wanted to pressure Sultan they used "Armenian Question" (The term "**Armenian Question**" as used in European history, became commonplace among diplomatic circles and in the popular press after the Congress of Berlin in 1878. As with the Eastern Question, it refers to Europe's involvement with the Armenian subjects of the Ottoman Empire, beginning with the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78. In specific terms, the Armenian question refers to the protection and the freedoms of Armenians from their neighboring communities. The "Armenian Question" explains the 40 years of Armenian-Ottoman history in the context of English, German, and Russian politics between 1877–1914. The term "Armenian Question" is also often used to refer to the question of Turkey's lack of acknowledgement of the events surrounding the Armenian Genocide).²⁹ Thus, the Ottoman Government found the best way to "solve" "Armenian Question"- to destroy an entire nation.

When the Young Turks come to power, Armenians proclaimed their victory amid manifestation of Christian and Muslim Ottoman brotherhood. But soon they faced the bitter reality. Young Turks adopted the policy(ideology) of Pan-Islamism and Pan-Turkism. They began to envisage new, homogeneous Turkish state in the place of the enervated multinational Ottoman Empire. In order to achieve that goal all non Turkic nations of the Empire have to be assimilated-Turkified (like Kurds) or annihilated (Christians). World War I was very good occasion for the Young Turks to implement their plans.

²⁹"Armenian Question", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Question#cite_note-etudes-1, (accessed on September 20, 2019).

The Armenian Genocide was not a spontaneous event (although it appeared to be to the international community), nor was it the result of a single action. There were many long-term and short-term factors (in isolation none of these factors could have sparked the mass bloodshed). These incredibly interconnected factors included the racial, political, economic, and religious situations, as well as the history of the region, in particular the Ottoman Empire, at the turn of the 20th century.

Two main events: 1894-1896 Hamidian massacres and 1909 Adana massacre prepare the ground for the Armenian Genocide.

But we have to see the picture in a whole. The Armenian Genocide wasn't a single episode. All the cleansings and massacres of the Christian population of the Ottoman Empire are connected and lead to the Genocide.

Who were the Young Turks? In 1908 a small group of Ottoman revolutionaries—the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), popularly referred to as the "Young Turks" came to power. Armenians and other minorities of the empire welcomed the restoration of the Ottoman constitution and the promise of elections led Armenians and other non-Turks within the empire to cooperate with the new political order. But over time the ambitions of the Young Turks became more militant, less tolerant of non-Turks and increasingly suspicious of their Armenian subjects.

In the beginning of 1910s at a number of secret sessions and conferences of the Union and Progress Party's Central Committee the Young Turkish decision to solve the Armenian Question through genocide was finally adopted. The Young Turks conference in 1911 in Salonika stood out in this regard, here the leadership explicitly decided to Turkify all the non-Turkish nations of the Empire. This decision most acutely impacted the Armenians throughout the Empire's territories. And the official strategy of the policy adopted by Young Turks became the decisions made at the conference. After secret orders were signed by Talaat and sent to the Empire's local authorities in order for them to take prior necessary measures for exterminating the Armenians.³⁰

³⁰ "Chronology", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, (no date available), <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/chronology.php>, (accessed on September 20, 2019).

3. The Armenian Genocide

"Either the Armenians would eliminate the Turks or the Turks would eliminate the Armenians. I didn't hesitate for one moment when confronted with this dilemma. My Turkish identity won out over my profession. I thought: we must destroy them before they destroy us. If you ask me how I as a doctor could commit murder, my answer is simple: the Armenians had become dangerous microbes in the body of this country. And surely it is a doctor's duty to kill bacteria?"
Dr Mehmed Reshid (1873-1919), Governor of Diyarbekir during the genocide³¹

What is the Armenian Genocide?

When did it happen?

Who were the perpetrators of the Genocide?

In this chapter I shall try to give entire and comprehensive answer to these questions.

The extermination of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the surrounding regions during 1915-1923 is called the Armenian Genocide. Those massacres were masterminded and perpetrated by Young Turks government and were later finalized by the Kemalist government. By 1923 Armenians had been disrooted from their historic homeland.

We mark April 24 as Genocide commemoration day, but that doesn't mean the Ottoman Empire implemented its monstrous plan that day, the Genocide started much earlier. Just on April 24, 1915 about 250 prominent Armenians (writers, journalists, doctors, scientists, clergymen, intellectuals, including Armenian members of the parliament) were rounded up before their deportation to Ottoman hinterlands where most died (that's why this event is widely considered the start of the genocide- it is well-known truth if you want to destroy a nation, start with the elite). The entire higher echelon of the Armenians was eliminated during some weeks (only in Constantinople 2,345 Armenian intellectuals were arrested and executed in the following weeks).

The decision for the deportation of all Armenians from the Western Armenia (Eastern Anatolia) was adopted in late 1911 in Thessaloniki and WWI was a suitable opportunity for the Young Turks for the implementation of the plan. As it was mentioned in the second chapter, when WWI began, the Young Turks government, hoping to save the remains of the weakened Ottoman Empire, adopted a policy of Pan Turkism (their main aim was to establish a mega Turkish empire

³¹Ugur Ümit Üngör, "The Armenian Genocide, 1915", in: Barbara Boender & Wichert ten Have (ed.), *The Holocaust and Other Genocides: An Introduction* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012), pp.45-71.

comprising of all Turkic-speaking peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia extending to China). The plan was to turkify the Muslims and to exterminate Christians (here Armenians) living in the Ottoman Empire. Talaat Pasha (Interior Minister), Enver Pasha (Minister of Military Affairs), Djemal Pasha (commander of the Palestinian Front), Behaeddin Shakir Bey (Young Turk Central Committee member) and others were among the implementers of the project.

The main perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide are;

Ismail Enver Pasha (1881-1922) In 1914 Enver was made Minister of War. In this same year he purged the Ottoman Officer Corps and held secret negotiations with Germany for a military alliance. His political fantasy to unite the Turkish peoples in a pan-Turkish state came to an end when he was killed in an anti-Russian uprising on 4 August 1922.

Ukrü Kaya (1883-1959) Kaya was one of the persons who bore major responsibility for the mass murder of the Armenians. As head of the administrative apparatus he was responsible for the deportation process, while supervising the construction of concentration camps on the River Euphrates. For many years Kaya held key positions in the Turkish republic under Atatürk.

Dr Bahaeddin Shakir (1877-1922) Shakir was one of the most influential members of the Central Committee of the CUP. He played a crucial role in the genocide. His proximity to Talaat enabled him to rise quickly through the ranks, which is evidenced by the fact that he was charged with setting up the Special Organisation in 1914. Shakir was killed in Berlin on 17 April 1922.

Mehmed Talaat Pasha (1874-1921) As Minister of Home Affairs he was responsible for the deportation and destruction of the Armenian people. He resigned his post on 14 October 1918, two weeks before the surrender. On 15 March 1921, following his escape with other important Young Turks, he was murdered in Berlin. Most of the organizers of the genocide were killed by the Armenian revenges.

The Armenian population became the main obstacle in the way of the realization of this policy. Intending to exterminate Armenians the Young Turks wanted to abolish the Armenian Question.

The Young Turks joined the Central Powers (Germany and Austro-Hungary) against the Triple Entente (France, Great Britain and Russia). They hoped that participation in the war would solve the problems of the Empire. The Ottoman Army had great losses from the first moment it entered the war. Enver Pasha, the Minister of War, driven by ambition and expansionism, launched a number of invasions that had catastrophic results. He attributed these adversities to "Armenian betrayal". The Armenians were used as a scapegoat: Turkish-nationalistic propaganda

accused the Armenians of treason, called for a boycott of Armenian businesses and spread horror stories of alleged crimes by Armenian activists. The more hopeless the war became, the more radical the persecution of the Armenians.

The Armenian plateau again become the inevitable theater of another Russo-Turkish war. And no matter who might eventually win the war the Armenians would suffer severely- the Armenian homelands lay on both sides of the frontier. Both the Russians and the Ottomans attempted to recruit the local Christians (mainly Armenians and Assyrians) in their campaigns against their enemies, because they lived along the Russian-Ottoman front. The Young Turks proposed to the Dashnaksutyun, leading Armenian political party at that time, that it convince Russian Armenians as well as those in Ottoman lands to fight for the Ottoman Empire. The Dashnaks replied that Armenians would remain loyal to their respective empires. That was seen by the Young Turks as an act of treachery. Armenians in the Ottoman Empire fought alongside the Ottomans, while Armenian volunteer units made up of Russian subjects fought on the Russian side. The war had also reinforced the myth of a "stab in the back" by the Ottoman Christians. Tensions mounted among politicians, with the CUP launching provocations, accusations, curses and threats at Ottoman Bulgarians, Greeks and Armenians in Parliament.³²

CUP officials were also insisting on an Armenian revolt in some provincial districts. These allegations had no real basis but were deliberately fabricated. In his book, *The Young Turks crime against humanity. The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* Taner Akcam brings many documents proving this:

...the responses of the various provincial governors are strikingly similar, each and every one of them informing Istanbul that there was no chance of an uprising or similar danger. For example, in the coded cable of 17 August 1914 the assistant governor of Erzurum informed his superiors in the capital that the Armenians in his province were not engaged in any sort of uprising whatever; rather, they lived close to and interspersed among the Muslims, with whom they got along quite well.³³

A similar picture emerges from a August 25, 1914 report sent by Tahsin Bey, the governor of Van (and later Erzurum). There Tahsin Bey states that "neither before the general mobilization nor after has there been a single person from the Armenian population who has immigrated to Russia or Iran or fled their home. Among the local Armenians there are neither thought of revolt or

³² Ibid.

³³ Taner Akcam, *The Young Turks crime against humanity. The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), p. 170.

even oppositions to the government..... On the contrary", he adds, "among the Dashnaks one can see [an attitude of] vocal support for and vis-a-vis the government in regard to the general mobilization and war". The only observation that the governor considers important to report is that "in the private clubs in which the younger Armenian merchants and leaders meet", they are saying that "they do not want the Russians to be defeated by the Germans, and that the [push for] Armenian Reforms can only go forward if Russia were to become dominant in Europe."³⁴ There are similar reports from other provinces too. So, the allegations that Armenian population was getting ready for a revolt are baseless and were used by the Young Turks (now are used by the Turkish officials) only to justify their atrocities against the Armenians.

Even as late as April 1915 Ottoman military and civilian leaders and German military and diplomatic functionaries (stationed in or toured the region) were reporting back to their superiors that there was no uprising being prepared by Armenians.

Right after entering the War, the Young Turks confined journalists to Istanbul; the main communications system, the telegraph, was under government control; news were censored. However, the truth about deportations was revealed as soon as they started. News of the massacres was delayed because they were done in desolate regions away from inhabited places.

In order to implement their program of annihilation of the Armenians, the Ottoman authorities first tried to deprive the Armenians of the opportunity to resist.

The Armenian Genocide was implemented in 3 phases (some historians and genocide scientists point 2, some 5 phases). During the first phase, all the Armenian male population of 15-45(60) ages were recruited to Army; they were disarmed and then killed in separate groups of 50-100. The slaughter of Armenian political, intellectual, cultural and military leaders was the second phase of Genocide. On April 24, 1915 in Constantinople (Istanbul) over 250 intellectuals were arrested and taken to prison and by April 29 this number was far beyond 800. They all were then subjected to unspeakable tortures and executed. This was considered the start of the wider genocide. Such famous Armenians as Siamanto, Grigor Zohrap, Ruben Sevak, Daniel Varuzhan and other progressive minded intellectuals turned into the victims of the Turkish sword. The third phase was the extermination of unprotected and peaceful Armenian population (mainly women, old people and children. Horrendous death marches, exiles and pogroms were on the way). Rest of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were forced into deportations and death marches. In some cases people had to travel over 1,000 kilometres through the burning heat of the merciless Eastern

³⁴ Ibid, p. 171.

Anatolian summer, which was a death sentence for many. Moreover, the Young Turk leaders were well aware that there is almost no chance of survival in the desert of the Der el-Zor. For children, the elderly and pregnant women in particular the deportations were nothing less than death marches. The deportation and massacre of the Armenian population of Van, Erzurum, Bitlis, Kharberd, Sebastia, Diyarbakir, Cilicia, Western Anatolia and other places started in May-June 1915. The Armenians were transported to isolated, uninhabited places in order to be massacred. In some places the Armenian population tried to resist.

The description and definition of the target group of the genocide was continually being changed and adapted. At first Talaat ordered the deportation of the Apostolic Armenians. But after the Protestant and Catholic Armenians were also included in the group to be persecuted, followed later even by Armenians who had converted to Islam. The Armenian identity was radicalised. Finally every Armenian, no matter loyal or disloyal, political or apolitical, was a target and a potential victim. Dr. Nazim, one of the ideologues of the CUP, stated in a closed session of the Central Committee in February 1915: "It is absolutely necessary to eliminate the Armenian people in its entirety, so that there is no further Armenian on this earth and the very concept of Armenia is extinguished."³⁵

Any type of assistance to the convoys of deportees was denied. There is vast evidence in the German and American archives showing that no systematic and organized assistance was afforded by the Ottoman government to the Armenians and that offers of assistance from outside were refused. For example, German missionaries reported that "the Turkish Government.... has not taken the necessary measures to prevent the deportees from starving to death" and that it rejected "efforts to bring assistance to women and children, even those in difficult situations". Wolff-Metternich, the German ambassador to the Porte, wrote in his report of 27 December 1915 that the Ottoman government had placed enormous obstacles in the way of all offers of assistance. Almost the same were reporting American missionaries and others stationed in the region. Dr. William S. Dodd, who served in Konya during this period, wrote to the US ambassador H. Morgenthau on 6 May 1915:

I went to the Police Mudir /commissioner/ and asked permission to see them and was refused. The second time I went permission was granted, a police officer being present, so that I could get very little information. I went again and asked permission to give aid to them in the name of the Red Cross.... The Mudir refused permission, telling me to wait until the Vali /provincial governor/ should come. The Vali came last night, and I called on him today. He told me that they

³⁵ G.S. Graber, *Caravans To Oblivion: The Armenian Genocide, 1915* (Wiley: The University of Michigan 1996), pp. 87-88.

were not in any need, and that I would not be allowed to give aid. I asked to see them and he refused.

In his report of 20 August 1915, Ambassador Morgenthau wrote that the government had prevented the distribution of relief supplies that had been sent to Urfa, and that interior minister Talat Pasha had actually demanded of him that those regional consuls who attempted to have aid delivered to the region should be recalled.³⁶

What is interesting here that some officials of modern Turkey, when trying to deny the Armenian Genocide, say that the deportees died from the famine and diseases. But lots of documents found in the foreign archives show that the Ottoman officials of that time, when refusing foreign aid, were insisting that there is no famine. For example, US Ambassador Morgenthau, who sent a lengthy report back to Washington on 26 July 1916, recounted in detail the explanation he had received from the Ottoman government for refusing his offer of aid. What is of crucial importance in the ambassador's account is that a high-ranking member of the Unionist regime rejects the claims that the Armenians who are perishing during the deportations are doing so because of hunger.... In addition, in giving this explanation, the Ottoman minister denied that there actually was a famine.³⁷

Moreover, investigations were opened against those persons who provided assistance to the deportees.

US Ambassador to Turkey Henry Morgenthau has already guessed that the deportation of the Armenian population pursues one goal - mass destruction of Armenians.

And Talaat was quite clear to the American Ambassador Henry Morgenthau about his intentions: "I have asked you to come today so that I can explain our position on the whole of the Armenian subject. We base our objections to the Armenians on three distinct grounds. In the first place they have enriched themselves at the expense of Turks. In the second place they are determined to domineer over us and to establish a separate state. In the third place they have openly encouraged our enemies. They have assisted the Russians in the Caucasus and our failure there is largely explained by their actions. We have therefore come to the irrevocable decision that we shall make them powerless before this war is ended... It is no use for you to argue, we have already disposed of three quarters of the Armenians; there are none at all left in Bitlis, Van and Erzurum. The hatred between the Turks and the Armenians is now so intense that we have got to finish with them. If we don't, they will plan their revenge... We care nothing about the commercial loss. We have figured all that out and know that it will not exceed five million Turkish Lira. We don't worry

³⁶ Akcam, *The Young Turks crime against humanity*, pp. 426-427.

³⁷ *Ibid*, pp. 429-430.

about that. I have asked you to come here so as to let you know that our Armenian policy is absolutely fixed and that nothing can change it. We will not have the Armenians anywhere in Anatolia... No Armenian can be our friend after what we have done to them."³⁸

In his book (*Ambassador Morgenthau's story*, 1918, Published by the library of Alexandria) H. Morgenthau gave an unforgettable description of the torment of the deportees:

"The whole course of the journey became a perpetual struggle with the Moslem inhabitants. Detachments of gendarmes would go ahead, notifying the Kurdish tribes that their victims were approaching, and Turkish peasants were also informed that their longwaited opportunity had arrived. The Government even opened the prisons and set free the convicts, on the understanding that they should behave like good Moslems to the approaching Armenians. Thus every caravan had a continuous battle for existence with several classes of enemies -- their accompanying gendarmes, the Turkish peasants and villagers, the Kurdish tribes and bands of Chétés or brigands. And we must always keep in mind that the men who might have defended these wayfarers had nearly all been killed or forced into the army as workmen, and that the exiles themselves had been systematically deprived of all weapons before the journey began. ... Such as escaped ... attacks in the open would find new terrors awaiting them in the Moslem villages. Here the Turkish roughs would fall upon the women, leaving them sometimes dead from their experiences or sometimes ravingly insane. After spending a night in a hideous encampment of this kind, the exiles, or such as had survived, would start again the next morning. The ferocity of the gendarmes apparently increased as the journey lengthened, for they seemed almost to resent the fact that part of their charges continued to live. Frequently anyone who dropped on the road was bayoneted on the spot. The Armenians began to die by hundreds from hunger and thirst. Even when they came to rivers, the gendarmes, merely to torment them, would sometimes not let them drink. The hot sun of the desert burned their scantily clothed bodies, and their bare feet, treading the hot sand of the desert, became so sore that thousands fell and died or were killed where they lay. Thus, in a few days, what had been a procession of normal human beings became a stumbling horde of dust-covered skeletons, ravenously looking for scraps of food, eating any offal that came their way, crazed by the hideous sights that filled every hour of their existence, sick with all the diseases that accompany such hardships and privations, but still prodded on and on by the whips and clubs and bayonets of their executioners."³⁹

³⁸Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau's story* (New York: Doubleday & Company, 1918), chapter XXIV.

³⁹Ibid.

The ultimate goal of deportation was also known to Turkey's ally Germany, whose ambassador Hans Wangenheim had informed his government about that several times.

Armenians deported from their places of permanent residence were sent to the depths of empire, Mesopotamia and Syria by caravans where special camps were created for them. On the way, they were being attacked by Turkish and Kurdish gangs. The smallest part of the displaced has reached camps. Hundreds of thousands of people have become victims of hunger, disease and epidemics. In the secret telegram sent to the Governor of Aleppo Talaat demanded to exterminate the Armenians, not paying attention to "to the sex, not having remorse".

By the middle of the summer of 1915 Swedish Ambassador in the Ottoman Empire C. Anckarsvärd realized what was going on. He has seen the pattern and understood who is responsible:

The persecutions of Armenians have reached hair-raising proportions and everything seems to indicate that the Young Turks want to use the opportunity, since for various reasons no effective external pressure is expected, to put an end to the Armenian question once and for all. The means are simple enough and consist of the extermination of the Armenian nation. Nothing stops this; in addition to one or two massacres they have now, as a way out, resorted to expelling Armenians from areas in which they have been resident or had their living for centuries, and disperse them to other locations in this geographically huge empire.⁴⁰

A Swedish Military Attache in Turkey from 1915 Einar af Wirsén, witness of the Armenian Genocide, wrote his memoir (*Memories from Peace and War*), where he has a short chapter called "The Murder of a Nation." There he wrote about the end of the Armenian nation and that the Turkish authorities knew what they were going:

In the early part of 1915 the Turkish authorities were somewhat cautious but after Turkey had repelled the Anglo-French fleet attacking the Dardanelles, they took energetic measures. Officially, the objective was to relocate the entire Armenian population to the steppe areas in northern Mesopotamia and Syria, but in reality they intended to annihilate the Armenians, thereby enabling the purely Turkish element in Asia Minor to establish a dominant position. The Turkish government acted with great cunning. As a rule, the transports were ordered by word of mouth and were strictly classified; they seem to imply, at least in part, some freedom for the authorities to effectuate the massacres. Those expelled were often separated into different groups adult men for themselves and women and children for themselves. Many men were murdered, the younger

⁴⁰ Goran Gunner, *Genocide of Armenians-Through Swedish Eyes* (Yerevan: The Armenian Genocide Museum-institute 2013), p. 133.

women were transferred to Turkish harems, and the children were left to starve to death apart from those, who as happened on some occasions, were tied in hundreds to rafts and drowned in the River Euphrates. He states that the campaign was largely implemented in the summer of 1915 but was kept classified so that it was not until the late summer that diplomats in Constantinople got to know what happened. He mentions, that when they returned to Constantinople, German officers who had been on the spot in Anatolia were so upset about what they had seen that they returned the Turkish medals they had received earlier.

The chapter of his book ends as follows: The extermination of the Armenian nation in Asia Minor must shock all human feelings. Without doubt, it belongs to the greatest crimes carried out in recent centuries. The way the Armenian problem has been solved was hair-raising. In front of me I can still see Talaat's cynical expression, stressing that Armenian question had been solved. And I agree with the German military delegate in Constantinople, General von Lossow, who although he to some extent defended the Turkish measures, expressed to me in private: "the Armenian massacres are the most bestial acts in the world history."⁴¹

Two of the most significant structural components of the Armenian Genocide were religious conversion and the assimilation of Armenian children into Muslim families. Armenians were assimilated in several ways: religious conversion, a temporary policy of dispersed settlement, the reassignment of children from Christianity to Islam, and the forced marriage or concubinage of young Christian women and adolescent girls with Muslim men.⁴² We can find lot of information about this topic in German and American consular reports of that period, as well as in missionary and survivor accounts.

Forcible Islamization operated in parallel with annihilation. The earliest known document on conversion is a "confidential" cipher telegram of 22 June 1915 to the seven provinces (Erzurum, Van, Mamuretulaziz, Diyarbekir, Sivas, Bitlis, and Trebizond). Local officials were instructed that "the Armenians who have been deported from your province to the south and who converted to Islam individually or collectively be detained, and those who are found assembled together be dispersed in the province." In the end of the document there was an instruction to take the copy of the cable from the telegraph office and destroy it.

German consul Schebuner-Richter reported from Erzurum in June 2, 1915 that "the Armenians who are converting are not being removed from their places." We can see similar information in the reports of American diplomats. American consul William Peter reported on 10

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 120-122.

⁴² Akcam, *The Young Turks crime against humanity*. p. 290.

June 1915 that religious conversions were well under way: "until now about 150 families have been converted to Islamism and the rest have been sent to the Interior. On 25 June 1915, the German consul at Samsun reported that 'the government sent fanatical, strictly religious Muslim men and women into all Armenian homes to spread propaganda for conversion to Islam, of course with the threat of serious consequences for those who remain true to their beliefs.'"⁴³

The witnesses of Missionaries and other eyewitnesses:

Although the Young Turk government took precautions and imposed restrictions on reporting and photographing, there were many witnesses of the Armenian Genocide. The Armenian Genocide was widely covered in the international community and in many publications such as magazines, newspapers, books and memoirs. The Near East Foundation even used media and newspapers to raise the plight of the Armenians. Lots of foreigners in the Ottoman Empire witnessed the deportations, among them were U.S. diplomatic representatives and American missionaries. They were one of the first to send news to the outside world about the unfolding genocide. Many German, Swedish eyewitnesses reported on the inhuman atrocities committed against the Armenians. Some of German officers who held important military assignments in the Ottoman Empire condoned the Young Turk policy. Some confidentially reported to their superiors in Germany about the massacres of the Armenian population. Among the eyewitnesses were many Russians, Arabs.

Many well-known newspapers in the English such as The Times, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Los Angeles Times, The Globe and Mail, The Toronto Star, The Montreal Gazette, and others also reported extensively about the events. The New York Times even published thousands of articles pertaining to the Armenian massacres between 1894-1922 and 124 articles in 1915 alone.⁴⁴ The Washington Post and The New York Times reported on the Armenian massacres almost daily for over a year. Local press coverage in the Ottoman Empire came mainly from the Takvim-i Vekayi, the official gazette of the Ottoman government. During the Turkish Courts-Martial of 1919–1920, the newspaper became especially important because it reported the cross-examinations of Turkish officials and the verdict of court which sentenced Talaat, Enver, and Cemal Pashas to death for their roles in massacres against Armenians.

⁴³ Ibid, pp. 291-292.

⁴⁴ Richard Diran Kloian, *The Armenian genocide: news accounts from the American press, 1915-1922*, (The University of Michigan: Anto Printing, 1988).

Many Turkish officials were witnesses as participants in the Armenian Genocide. Some of them gave testimony under oath during the post-war tribunals convened to try the Young Turk conspirators who organized the Armenian Genocide.

Here I will bring some of their testimonies.

During the massacres of the Armenian population in Mush, the city was set on fire by the Turkish army: thousands of Armenians were burnt alive in their houses.



In this photo the children with carefree and innocent eyes are the Armenian girls of the Mush orphanage with their teacher Margaret. The photo was taken by a Norwegian missionary Bodil Katharine Biørn - a member of the Scandinavian organization "Women Missionary Workers." Before the tragic events of 1915, Bodil Biørn worked in the orphanages of Mush and Mezre.

The photo is taken by Bodil Biørn Norwegian missionary.

The photo is available at the website of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/15.04.2015-100photos.php> (The source of the photograph: The Collection of the Norwegian Royal Archive. From the book "100 Photographic stories about the Armenian Genocide").

CHILDREN BURNT ALIVE BY THE TURKS IN MUSH IN 1915

According to the note left by Bodil Biørn (also known as Mother Katharine, was a Norwegian missionary) on the back of the photo, the teacher Margaret and her children were also burnt alive. A witness of the Turkish crimes, Sister Biørn suffered intense anguish losing all the children of her orphanage in one day, to whom she had given her maternal love and care over years. The screams and calls of help of the helpless children were embedded in the memory of Bodil Biørn. In 1916, coming back to Mush, together with her Armenian assistant Karapet Yeghiazaryan Bodil gathered 34 orphans from the streets and abandoned houses, fed and gave them shelter saving from the impending death, something she was unable to do for her orphanage children.

"After losing my orphans I have psychically suffered a lot, but the desperation failed to intimidate me to leave immediately and turn back to my homeland. I stayed in Kharberd for five months. Looking forward to an opportunity to return to Mush and investigate if I could find some of my orphans alive and my heart gets rest" (**Bodil Biørn-Witness of the Armenian Genocide**).⁴⁵

⁴⁵"Children burnt alive by the Turks in Mush in 1915", from the special project "100 photographic stories about the Armenian Genocide", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, 15.04.2015, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/15.04.2015-100photos.php>, (accessed on September 22, 2019).



Armenian refugee women around the corpse of a donkey, From the special project "100 photographic stories about the Armenian Genocide", 25.03.2015. The photo is taken by Armin Theophil Wegner- A German officer in the Ottoman Army 1915-1916. The photo is available at the website of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/25.03.2015-100photos.php>. (The source of the photo: Collection of the Armenian National Archive. From "100 Photographic Stories of the Armenian Genocide" book).

This photo was made in 1916 in Horan region of Syria. This is a unique scene of tortured and hungry Armenian refugee women grouped around the corpse of a donkey. The author of a photo is Hasan Amjan who was appointed by Djemal Pasha as an inspector of the Armenian deportees. He was personally in charge of resettling the Armenian deportees in Syria and Lebanon.

The photo proves a critical situation of the Armenian deportees. To satisfy their hunger and thirst people were forced to perform unimaginable: even some examples of cannibalism were reported. When Hasan Amjan approached them with a photo camera to depict that scene, no one paid attention, casted a glance or looked at his direction.

Later Hasan Amjan handed this photo to the extraordinary military court (headed by Nemrut Mustafa Pasha) investigating mass annihilation of the Armenians as a proof of a crime committed against the Armenian population of the Ottoman Empire.

"The Armenians were eating grass, roots, horse carrion, until the hunger eats up last sparks and power, spreading ashes of corpses in the country" (**Armin Theophil Wegner**, a German officer in the Ottoman Army 1915-1916, an eyewitness of the Armenian Genocide).⁴⁶

⁴⁶"Armenian refugee women around the corpse of a donkey", from the special project "100 photographic stories about the Armenian Genocide", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, 25.03.2015, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/25.03.2015-100photos.php>, (accessed on September 22, 2019).



TAKING PHOTO WITH DEATH...

The photo is of German soldiers who served in the territory of Ottoman Empire during World War I. They were photographed with the bones of brutally killed Armenians near Hekimkhan. The date of the photo is also known, 18 November 1918.

The negative of this photo was given by German soldiers to the Armenian photographer Tsolak Dildilian in order to depict it. The photo is available at the website of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/20.02.2015-100photos.php>. (The source of the photograph: The source of the photograph: collection of Tsolak Dildilian. From "100 Photographic Stories of the Armenian Genocide" book).

This photo and its negative have an interesting story. The Armenian photographer Tsolak Dildilian, who pretended to convert to Islam, after depicting and giving the photo to the Germans have decided to keep the negative assuming that the relics in the photo might be of his relatives who were killed in the same place in mid 1915.

The Germans probably agreed, because it was no longer important to preserve its privacy. The war was over; Germany and its ally the Ottoman Empire were defeated in World War I.

During the years of the Armenian Genocide German soldiers had repeatedly photographed the Armenian refugees and genocide victims, though there was strict censorship law in the Ottoman Empire.

"Massacre of Armenians was carried out massively. This policy of extermination will discredit the name of Turkey for so long" (Richard von Kühlmann, German Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire 1916-1917).⁴⁷

Swedish missionary Alma Johansson was working in the Ottoman Empire. Johansson and the missionary activity were perceived as German. She worked in an Armenian orphanage, but was not able to save "her" children from the persecutions. They were locked into a house which was set on fire. Alma was devastated and travelled throughout a war-torn Turkey in order to give her report. Her accounts were soon published together with other testimonies. After some years she published her story as a book. Together with her Scandinavian co-workers Bodil Biorn from Norway and

⁴⁷"Taking photo with death...", from the special project "100 Photographic Stories of the Armenian Genocide", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, 20.02.2015, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/20.02.2015-100photos.php>, (accessed on September 22, 2019).

Maria Jacobsen from Denmark, Alma Johansson stayed with the Armenians during the genocide and witnessed what befell them. Even before 1915 she wrote letters about condition in Moush, one of those letters written on August 27, 1914, that reached the Swedish Ambassador Anckarsvard, I will present below:

Once again I will try get in contact with the outside world. There is no need to depict our feelings here, no information is reaching us, and what does arrive is contradictory. Here, a situation of official robbery prevails and you need to see it and hear it yourself so as not to believe the stories are exaggerated. Nothing has been left in the villages except the buffalos and some skinny cows. Of course, of the collected livestock, wheat, lard and so on, maybe half goes to the Government and the other half to the collector.

No one dares complain, since he can only expect imprisonment or being beaten half-dead. Anyone can take whatever he wants out of the shops but, of course, he must be a Turk and if he also wears blue gendarme-trousers that is enough and if he doesn't, he just says he is a "kavass"(armed police-officer), whom no one has the right to question. After the people had been robbed in this way-all males, even old men with grey hair, half-blind, limping-whatever there is, was collected, and thereafter, every village had to pay an enormous amount of money within a fixed time. But the harvest is still in the field, no one is left to take care of it, so, just imagine the consequences. In the last couple of days they have started to break into the houses and take whatever they find: beds, carpets, mattresses, and smaller kitchen appliances. [...] The Armenian population in particular is most upset about everything connected with Germany and since they see no difference between the nation and the individual, they claim that we are responsible for all this misery, and we receive many different threats. [...]

The current Mutessarif from Musch is a real beast in the guise of a human being; although previously he also did many ugly deeds; the present time is right for releasing all evil passions. He is also a personal friend of both the Minister of War and the Minister of the Interior and because of that, has been able to do whatever suits him. If disturbances break out here, we have nothing good to expect from him.

Indeed, I hope this letter will reach its destination.⁴⁸

Turkish censors tried to stop Johansson and other missionaries. When she realized this, she started writing what seem to be harmless texts, and she was trying to find new ways to tell her story. She found other ways of conveying the dreadful news. For example, she was using quotations from

⁴⁸ Gunner, *Genocide of Armenians*, pp. 167-168.

the Bible, the censors sometimes let few quotations pass, probably they didn't realize their significance. One letter states: Jer. 5:30; Jer. 14:18-19 and Jer. 22:10. If we look in the Bible we will find the following:

A horrible and shocking thing has happened in the land. Jeremiah 5:30.

If I go into the country, I see those slain by the sword: if I go into the city, I see the ravages of famine. Both prophet and priest have gone to a land they know not. Jeremiah 14:18.

Do not weep for the dead king or mourn his loss; rather, weep bitterly for him who is exiled, because he will never return nor see his native land again. Jeremiah 22:10.⁴⁹

Other missionaries were using the same technology to avoid the Turkish censor.

Alma Johansson's account about the events in Moush is very important (we get the opportunity to know what happened in Moush from the first hand). In Johansson's statements we should stress some important issues. The first is about the situation of women; a special house was established into which attractive girls and women were put, with free entrance for Turks. Destitute women came begging for alms and protection but missionaries were forbidden to help them. Thus, the situation for women was extremely difficult, with sexual violence aimed at the "beautiful ones" and a desperate situation for the survivors. Secondly, the Armenians only defended themselves "when they saw the gendarmes ill-treat their wives and children". When a few tried to protect their families, the entire village was burned down. According to Johansson the violence was one-sided.

I thought I could not bear any more. How did I not desire in those days that a merciful bullet would strike me? Sometimes, I found myself sitting on the floor with my head in my hands, anxious about losing my senses.⁵⁰ Only from this expression we can understand what atrocities witnessed A. Johansson. The testimonies of Johansson and other missionaries constitute unique documents.

In 1915, I was 14 years old. I was a shepherd grazing the animals of our people on the bank of the Euphrates River, near Rakka. I saw groups of people – tired, exhausted, in rags, half-naked, who came to our areas. Later, I learned that the Turkish government had deported them from their homeland and had driven them to the Syrian deserts. Those Armenian exiles had walked under the guard of Turkish gendarmes for days, without knowing where they were going. They left their relatives by the roads. These were unable to walk and many of them had been killed by the Turks. I and my cousins used to go to the desert on our camels and, seeing their miserable state, helped them by milking our camels and giving them the milk to drink instead of water. They were so

⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 178-179.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 193.

emaciated and weak that all of a sudden they fell down on the ground and died like sheep.⁵¹

Karen Jeppe's (The Mother of Armenians) memories are one of the important sources of the Armenian Genocide. Coming to Urfa in 1903, Jeppe dedicated herself helping Armenian nation. In 1915, during the days of the Armenian Genocide, Jeppe spared no efforts to help Armenians and provide them with shelter in her home. Ottoman gendarmes repeatedly searched her house but did not find any Armenians hiding in the basement and in her flower garden.

She tried to keep the world aware of crimes against the Armenians by her testimonies, lectures and published articles.

"It would be great not to see the death road, extended from Urfa to the far-far endless yellow plain scorched by sun. It was not full of fresh green, shady trees but instead with dead bodies with various degrees of decomposition. Some of them were fell down near the gates of the city. Patients were driven out of their beds beating them with sticks, some of them managed to make a few hundred extra step", wrote Jeppe.⁵²

"...It was not a flash of Muslim rage. Everything happened at the behest of the government, not because of religious fanaticism. It was the result of the implementation of political considerations – the Turkish government wanted to get rid of the non-Muslim peoples who violated the homogeneity of the empire, creating an element that was not always ready to submit to oppression...", wrote English diplomat James Bryce.⁵³

Laura Moehring, a German mission nurse, who travelled to Baghdad along the Euphrates River, Deir-es-Zor, with three companions during the middle of June 1915, reported,

The next day we met up with an entire Armenian camp during our midday break. In the manner of the Kurds, the poor people had made themselves primitive goat's hair tent in which they were resting. For the most part, however, they were lying unprotected on the burning sand under the beating sun. You cannot imagine anything more wretched than such a crowd in the desert under the given circumstances. It was clear from their clothes that they had lived in a certain state of wealth, and now misery was written all over their faces. Everyone was of the opinion that none of them would reach Baghdad; they considered the desert to be their grave.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Verjine Svazlian, *The Armenian Genocide: Testimonies of the Eyewitness Survivors* (Yerevan: "Gitoutyoum" Publishing House of NAS RA, 2011, testimony 303), pp. 498-499.

⁵² "KAREN JEPPE - 140", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, 27.12.2016, <http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/27.12.2016-Jeppe.php>, (accessed on October 1, 2019).

⁵³ James Bryce, "Erivan 1917 – Photo of Armenian Orphans", *Art-A-Tsolum*, October 5, 2018, <https://allinnet.info/history/erivan-1917-photo-of-armenian-orphans-commentary-by-james-bryce/>, (accessed on October 1, 2019).

⁵⁴ Wolfgang Gust, *The Armenian Genocide. Evidence from the German foreign office archives 1915-1916* (New York: Berghahn Books 2014), p. 31.

On July 7, 1915, the German ambassador in Constantinople, Baron Hans von Wangenheim, reported that deportation columns of Armenians from the eastern city of Erzurum were being ambushed by Kurdish bands, with "the men and children...butchered and the women carried away." On July 27, a German engineer on the Baghdad railway reported that a Turkish sergeant "abducted 18 women and girls and sold them to Arabs and Kurds for 2-3 Mejidiehs," a coin that was a fifth of a Turkish pound.

During the war, slave markets emerged in Aleppo, Damascus and several Anatolian towns in which Armenian girls who had been corralled by Turkish troops were sold for a pittance. Officials of the Ottoman Interior Ministry seem to have encouraged abduction and conversion. In December 1915, a telegram from the ministry decreed it "necessary for young Armenian girls to be married with Muslims."⁵⁵

One of the most important witness images about the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire are Armin Wegner's (a German soldier) photos.

The Turkish atrocities did not end up here. In 1918 with the invasion to Transcaucasia, Turkish troops continued the massacres of Armenians in Eastern Armenia. On September 15, when English forces left their positions, Turks captured Baku and with Azeri nationalists slaughtered 30 thousand Armenians. There are a lot of such examples. The last act of the Armenian Genocide was the massacre of Armenians during the Greek-Turkish war of 1919-1922. On September 9, 1922 Turks entered Izmir (Smyrna) and organized the massacre of Armenians and Greeks, shipwrecked ships full of Armenian and Greek refugees.

The American consul general in the town (Smyrna), George Horton, reported that one of the "outstanding features of the Smyrna horror" was the "wholesale violation of women and girls." In 1924, the British Foreign Office assessed that "not less than 80,000 Christians, half of them Armenians, and probably more" were still being detained in Turkish houses, "many of them in slavery."⁵⁶

Already by 1923 the entire Asia Minor and historic Western Armenia had been expunged of its indigenous Armenian population. Thus, although the killing of the Armenians stopped around 1923, the destruction of Armenian property and historical memory continued.

⁵⁵Benny Morris and Dror Ze'evi, "When Turkey Destroyed Its Christians", *The Wall Street Journal*, May 17, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-turkey-destroyed-its-christians-11558109896>, (accessed on October 1, 2019).

⁵⁶ Ibid.

It is worth noting that although the Armenian massacres were not the first in history, they were the first time in modern history that a government intentionally and strategically turned against part of its own population. While the initial theory was that the Armenians were being deported for their disloyalty to the state, it was later established that there were mass killings taking place under the watch of the government.

4. The consequences of the Genocide

More than a century has passed since the Armenian Genocide but up to this day every Armenian feel the consequences of that tragedy. It will still take a long time to rehabilitate from that terrible disaster.

Some topics about the Armenian Genocide are well discussed and documented (for example, the perpetrators, causes of the Genocide). But there are some questions that need further research, discussions (what's the impact of the Genocide on the future of our country, what's the influence of the genocide on our today's reality, cultural losses of the genocide, the question of raped and abused women, the question of Islamized, assimilated Armenians and so on).

In this chapter I will try to briefly outline some facts and figures, the numbers of genocide victims and the losses endured by the Armenian nation as a result of that tragedy.

During the Armenian massacres (1894-1896, 1909) and Genocide 1915-1922 the number of victims reached more than 2 million. In 1894-96 around 300,000 Armenians were massacred; 30,000 were killed in 1909; 1,5 million -during the 1915-16, and about 300,000 from 1918 to 1922. And what is pitifully, afterwards Armenians didn't have the right to shout about their victims and persecutions, about the horrible things that they saw and pass through due to the fact that the Eastern Armenia became a part of Soviet Union (as it is well known freedom of speech, choice, action and moreover protest were forbidden in the USSR, moreover Turkey was the best ally of the Soviet Union).

Until the events of 1915 the territory where ethnic Armenians lived included the whole Armenian plateau, that is, the historical Armenia. This territory totaled about 400,000 square km. One of the first terrible consequences of the Armenian Genocide, which was carried out by the Ottoman Empire, was that Armenians were wiped out from their homeland where they lived for the centuries. Regarding the strategic factor, the loss of the land deprived Armenians from most of their "castles", leaving only 1/10-th of the previous protective space.

The Armenian Genocide resulted in massive cultural losses of Armenian nation. The Ottomans premeditatedly destructed the Armenian cultural, religious, historical and communal heritage and that was another key purpose of both the genocide itself and the post-genocidal campaign of denial. Castles, towns, villages, schools, churches, monasteries, thousands of manuscripts were destroyed in result of the genocide, in some cities the Armenian quarters were

destroyed (e.g. Van). Many priceless secrets and data were destroyed (we lost part of the rich heritage that our ancestors left).

In 1914, the Armenian Patriarch in Constantinople presented a list of the Armenian holy sites under his supervision. The list contained 2,549 religious places of which 200 were monasteries while 1,600 were churches. In 1974 UNESCO stated that after 1923, out of 913 Armenian historical monuments left in Eastern Turkey, 464 have vanished completely, 252 are in ruins, and 197 are in need of repair.⁵⁷

There are many proven facts that the Young Turk government premeditated and planned a systematic method aiming to destroy not only the Armenian nation but also all the material testimonies of the Armenian civilization in Western Armenia. Thus clearly understanding the role of the church and Christian faith within the Armenian nation, Turks knowingly massacred Armenian clergymen, destroyed churches, monasteries and other properties of church, along with thousands of medieval handwritten illuminated manuscripts. Many medieval Armenian monasteries, such as Narekavank, Varakavank, Arakelots Vank, Surp Garabed and Surp Khach were demolished by the Young Turk regime.

For many years, the Western Armenian language was in danger of dying out.

An Arab eye witnesses to the Armenian Genocide, Fayez el Husseyn, writes in his memoirs "... After the massacres of the Armenians, the government established commissions who were engaged in selling the leftover property. Armenian cultural values were sold at the cheapest prices... I once went to the church to see how the sale of these things is organized. The doors of the Armenian schools were closed. The Turks used science books in the bazaar for wrapping cheese, dates, sunflowers..."⁵⁸

The policy of destruction of the Armenian historical and cultural heritage adopted by the Young Turks was continued in Republican Turkey (since these relics were viewed as undesirable witnesses of the Armenian presence in that territory).

Nowadays almost 90% of the Armenian cities, towns and buildings in Eastern Turkey Western Armenia (Eastern Anatolia) have been Turkified. Devising a systematic method of destruction, hundreds of architectural monuments have been destroyed and all Armenian inscriptions erased. Cultural genocide against the Armenian heritage on the territory of Turkey continues till nowadays.

⁵⁷ "Armenian Genocide", Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide#Cultural_loss, (accessed on October 3, 2019).

⁵⁸ "Cultural Genocide", *The Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute Foundation*, (no date available), http://www.genocide-museum.am/eng/cultural_genocide.php, (accessed on October 3, 2019).

The Ottoman Empire captured and confiscated all the property of Western Armenians. Armenians lost their wealth and property without compensation. Businesses and farms were lost, and all schools, churches, hospitals, orphanages, monasteries, and graveyards became Turkish state property. In January 1916, the Ottoman Minister of Commerce and Agriculture issued a decree ordering all financial institutions operating within the empire's borders to turn over Armenian assets to the government.⁵⁹ It is recorded that as much as six million Turkish gold pounds were seized along with real property, cash, bank deposits, and jewelry. The assets were then funneled to European banks, including Deutsche and Dresdner banks.⁶⁰

After the end of World War I, Genocide survivors tried to return and reclaim their former homes and assets, but were driven out by the Ankara Government.⁶¹

All the above-mentioned blows had their incurable impact on the moral condition of Armenians, which hampered the natural development of our nation, as well as spiritual and moral values. Also the genocide implanted complex of inferiority among many Armenians, pessimism concerning future.

The perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide aimed and succeeded in exterminating not only masses of people, but a whole nation, which formed a sound system based on century-long traditions and customs. During the 1915 events almost all the Western Armenian leading intellectuals, political and public figures were executed. Having lost their "heads" (i.e. leaders) Armenian nation was thereafter helpless, and bound to scatter from country to country until finding a shelter to stay. The survivors of the genocide, which formed the Diaspora, tough preserved some elements of national identity and mentality, but also adopted new moral and spiritual values, thus partly assimilating to nations that hosted them.

Another very important consequences of the Armenians Genocide was the forced loss of identity (the assimilation of Armenians). Women and children had to convert to Islam and deny their Christian faith. Numerous women and children were abducted during the deportations and forced to convert. In some cities (e.g. Konya and Beirut) Armenian children were placed in huge Muslim orphanages, they were given Turkish names and were allowed to speak only Turkish. As a result,

⁵⁹ Samuel Totten, William S. Parsons, Israel W. Charny, *Century of Genocide: Critical Essays and Eyewitness Accounts*, 2nd edition, (New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2004), pp. 65-80.

⁶⁰"Armenian Genocide Descendants File Class Action Against Deutsche Bank and Dresdner Bank", (LOS ANGELES, CA (PRWEB) JANUARY 13, 2006), <http://www.prweb.com/releases/2006/01/prweb332249.htm>, (accessed on October 5, 2019).

⁶¹Totten, Parsons, Charny, *Century of Genocide*, pp. 65-80.

many forgot their Armenian identity. The abductions and conversions were aimed at marginalising the Armenians and eradicating their culture and collective identity.

We got an information about forced assimilation of the Armenians during the genocide mainly from German and American consular reports, missionary and survivor accounts.

For example, American missionary Dr. J. K. Marden wrote, "In the town of Marsovan, from 13000 Armenians, over 11500 were deported and about 1500 accepted Mohammedianism as an alternative to sure death."⁶²

Another very important example. The 23 June cable, which was "to be taken care of personally", contains the following order:

The Armenian population from the same countries and districts [of a province] is to be broken up and settled in different regions, and no space or permission is to be given for the opening Armenian schools in their areas of settlement; thereby, their children are to be forced to continue their studies in the government schools and care and attention is to be given that the villages in which they are to be settled be at least five hours distant from one another and that they be in no place or condition that would allow for self-ruler or defense. ... [This telegram] is to be destroyed after its contents have been communicated to the necessary parties.⁶³

German ambassador Wolff-Metternich's did a very important observation on this topic: according to him the forcible assimilation of Armenians is not prompted by religious fanaticism. The aim is to blend the Armenians with the Muslim people of the Empire.⁶⁴

From the treatment of the Armenian children one can realize that the policy of assimilation was one of the structural elements of the Armenian Genocide.

In his book *The Young Turks crime against humanity. The Armenian Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing in the Ottoman Empire* Taner Akcam remarks that in the Ottoman archival documents assimilation policies are clearly described as having been previously "considered" or "thought over."

In this regard, the telegram that was sent from the Interior Ministry to the provinces (Adana, Aleppo, Diyarbekir, Erzurum, Bitlis, Van, Trebizond, Sivas and so on) is worth to mention:

For the purpose of the care and upbringing of children who probably will be left without a guardian [i.e., become orphans] during the course of the Armenians' transportation and deportation, their [the children's] distribution to notables and men of repute in villages and kazas [countries] where Armenians and foreigners are not found, and the payment of thirty gurus [kurush] monthly

⁶² Akcam, *The Young Turks crime against humanity*, p. 293.

⁶³ Ibid, p. 301.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 307.

from the special appropriations for immigrants for the children who will be left over after the distribution and will be given to those who do not have the means of subsistence, are seen as suitable. It is notified by circular that this be communicated to those for whom it is necessary and it be carried out as required in that way, and after cipher telegram is shown to those necessary it be destroyed.⁶⁵

And, as a result of assimilation, nowadays there are hundred of thousands hidden Armenians (as well as other nations) in modern Turkey. Hundreds of these so-called hidden Armenians, while remaining Muslims, have publicly acknowledged their family and Christian roots since the reopening of the Diyarbakir's Armenian church in 2011 (some Muslim Armenians even came to Armenia and asked to be baptised as Christians). But still tens of thousands of ethnic Armenians across Turkey remain in the shadows, reluctant or ashamed to admit their heritage for fear of discrimination.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p. 317.

5. International recognition of the Armenian Genocide and the denialist policy of Turkey

A Genocide denied is a Genocide repeated....

The fact of the Armenian Genocide by the Ottoman government has been documented, recognized, and affirmed in the form of media and eyewitness reports, laws, resolutions, and statements by many states and international organizations.⁶⁶

Most scholars, 31 countries, forty-nine U.S. states have accepted that the massacres of the Armenian nation beginning in 1915 were a systematic genocide perpetrated by state officials of the Ottoman Empire, wiping out a millennia-old civilization in Turkish lands.

And any true debate is not about whether the genocide happened or not, but about the exact number of murdered, the worth of the stolen property of Armenians and the long-term impact of this crime.

Nation leaders and prominent people throughout the world and through history recognize the Armenian Genocide.

"They were to be uprooted, whole households, from their homes, and driven off to an unknown destination... Communities like this, after being mutilated by the wholesale conscription or assassination of the husbands and fathers, were now torn up by the roots and driven, under the forlorn leadership of the old men, into an exile that was to terminate in a death of unspeakable horror." **Arnold Joseph Toynbee (1889-1975) British historian and educator who studied cyclical patterns in the growth and decline of civilizations.**

"In 1915 the Turkish government began and ruthlessly carried out the infamous general massacre and deportation of Armenians in Asia Minor. There is no reasonable doubt that this crime was planned and executed for political reason." **Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965) British politician and prime minister of the United Kingdom (1940-1945, 1951-1955).**

"...the Armenian massacre was the greatest crime of the war, and the failure to act against Turkey is to condone it ... the failure to deal radically with the Turkish horror means that all talk of guaranteeing the future peace of the world is mischievous nonsense." **Theodore Roosevelt May 11, 1918, letter to Cleveland Hoadley Dodge.**

⁶⁶ "Recognition", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, (no date available), <https://www.mfa.am/en/recognition/>, (accessed on October 5, 2019).

"Even after proclamation of the Constitution, the main slogan of the Turkish policy has been 'Without Armenians there will be no Armenian problem'." **Joseph Markwart German scientist, 1919.**

"In its attempt to carry out its purpose to resolve the Armenian question by the destruction of the Armenian race, the Turkish government has refused to be deterred neither by our representations, nor by those of the American Embassy, nor by the delegate of the Pope, nor by the threats of the Allied Powers, nor in deference to the public opinion of the West representing one-half of the world." **Count Wolff-Metternich German Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire July 10, 1916, cable to the German Chancellor.**

"The deportations of Western Armenians are nothing but concealed race extermination. There is no language rich enough to describe the horrors of it." **Jacques de Morgan French scientist, 1917.**

Israel W. Charny (Israeli psychologist and genocide scholar, executive director of the Institute on the Holocaust and Genocide, Jerusalem, Professor of Psychology and Family Therapy, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, founder of the International Association of Genocide Scholars, editor-in-chief and executive director of GPN – Genocide Prevention Now) "...The Armenian Genocide represents the first major genocide of the murderous twentieth century in which the awesome power of state machinery was applied for systematic killing (one Israeli scholar has since characterized the Armenian Genocide as "a dress rehearsal for the Holocaust"); moreover, the Armenian Genocide has succeeded in recent years in generating a considerable body of scholarship second only to scholarship on the Holocaust."⁶⁷

Beginning from the 1960s the Armenian diaspora worldwide has called for recognition and a public discussion of the genocide. And right after gaining its independence, the Republic of Armenia began to pursue the genocide recognition process.

The first country to recognize the Genocide was Uruguay on April 20, 1965. And every year, despite a huge pressure from Turkey, more and more countries, international organizations recognize the genocide.

Here are some of countries that officially recognized the genocide: Argentina, Austria, Bolivia, Brazil, France (on 24 April, 2019 France marked first national commemoration of Armenian genocide), Cyprus (denial of the genocide is criminalized in Cyprus), Greece (denial of

⁶⁷Arman J. Kirakossian, "LEADING SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD OF GENOCIDE STUDIES ON THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE", (References from contemporary Encyclopedias), (no date available), <https://www.mfa.am/filemanager/Statics/Leading%20specialists.pdf>, (accessed on October 6, 2019).

the genocide is criminalized. Punishable by up to 3 years in prison and a fine not to exceed €30,000), Switzerland (denial of the genocide is criminalized), Canada, Germany, Italy, Russia, Holy See, Venezuela, Portugal, Luxembourg.

The International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS) passed a resolution unanimously recognizing the Ottoman massacres of Armenians as genocide in 1997.

The European Parliament called the massacres of Armenians by Ottoman Empire a genocide on April 15, 2015.

On May 14, 2001 **the Council of Europe** recognized the Armenian Genocide.

The American Jewish Committee recognized the Armenian Genocide as a historical fact in 2014.

The European People's Party, (EPP) adopted a resolution recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide as well as paying tribute to the victims in the 100th anniversary on March 3, 2015.

In April 2006, the Turkish Human Rights Association, Istanbul Branch, recognized the events as a genocide.⁶⁸

Despite continuing international recognition of the Armenian Genocide, Turkish government's policy is the same as it was more than 100 years ago; the policy of denial is the official position of the Republic of Turkey concerning the Armenian Genocide. But the Turkish state does not have just one policy or rhetoric. According to denialists, the Armenians were guilty of collective treason against the state, "only" 300,000 Armenians were killed; the deportations were a preventative measure by the state to remove Armenians from the borderlines, and there was never any question of systematic and deliberate killing.

If one follows official and public discussions about Armenian Genocide, he could see that there are four main narratives in Turkey.

First one: We didn't slaughter Armenians, they slaughtered us.

One of the popular myths in Turkey about the genocide is that the Armenians were mass murderers and the actual perpetrators of genocide. This narrative is what is now taught to Turkish schoolchildren in middle and high schools.

⁶⁸" Recognition", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, (no date available), <https://www.mfa.am/en/recognition/>, (accessed on October 5, 2019).

In 2014 professor Taner Akçam wrote a comprehensive article how the 1915 genocide was represented in Turkish history textbooks used during the 2014 and 2015 school years. Those books are either prepared by the Ministry of National Education or approved by the Ministry's Instruction and Education Board.

Akçam wrote, "The textbooks characterize Armenians as people who are incited by foreigners, who aim to break apart the state and the country and who murdered Turks and Muslims." "The Armenian Genocide, referred to as the 'Armenian matter' in textbooks, is described as a lie perpetrated in order to meet these goals and is defined as the biggest threat to Turkish national security. Another threat to national security is missionaries and their activities."⁶⁹

Second one: Yes, we slaughtered Armenians. If they don't act, we will slaughter them again.

This is similar to the first one. This one is also openly expressed across Turkey.

This narrative proudly accepts that Turks slaughtered Armenians, but they have an excuse: "Yes, we did exterminate Armenians. But ask us why. Because they misbehaved and became traitors. And, if required, we will do it all over again. One cannot get even an inch of territory from Turkey."

Turkish authorities have also proudly named several places such as schools, neighborhoods, streets, and after the very people who planned or were directly involved in the Armenian Genocide—an open message to not only Armenians, Assyrians and Greeks but also to Kurds and other dissidents: "This is the possible end awaiting you if you don't obey us."

Third one: That tragedy happened during World War I. Armenians slaughtered us, and we slaughtered them. It was civil war. It is better to forget about it...

This narrative Turkey uses for international observers. For example, on April 24, 2015, on the 100th anniversary of the genocide, a message was sent by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to the religious ceremony held in the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul. It states:

My distinguished Armenian citizens,

In World War I, which ranks among humanity's major catastrophes, millions from all nations also perished within the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire.

⁶⁹Taner Akcam, "Akcam:Textbooks and the Armenian Genocide in Turkey: Heading Towards 2015", *The Armenian weekly*, 4.12.2014, <https://armenianweekly.com/2014/12/04/textbooks/>, (accessed on October 8, 2019).

I commemorate with compassion and respect all the Ottoman citizens, regardless of their ethnic and religious identity, who lost their lives under similar conditions during this War.⁷⁰

Basically, this message declares that: "What happened in 1915 was never genocide. People kill each other in all wars. All the Ottoman citizens lost their lives, not only Armenians. But we still remember all of the dead with love, so let's forget about it and move on already."

Taking into consideration the scale of the slaughter and the nature of the Armenian Genocide, Erdoğan's attempts to equate their suffering to that of "every citizen of the Ottoman Empire" is a form of denial in itself.

And, as we saw in the second narrative, at the same time, Turkey teaches its children that Armenians were the perpetrators of genocide. Also, Armenians are exposed to hate speech more than any other group, according to a periodic report on hate speech in the Turkish media, made by the Hrant Dink Foundation.⁷¹

If we compare this narrative with the first and the second one, it's more "moderate", it is just for the outside world, mainly for the West.

Forth one: Yes, Turkey committed Genocide

This rhetoric is presented by some intellectuals in the country, but never by the Turkish government. Since 2010, rights activists in Turkey led by the Human Rights Association (IHD) have commemorated the Armenian Genocide of 1915 in cities such as Istanbul, Ankara, and Diyarbakir. Turkish government has not prevented the commemoration events, nor has it arrested the organizers. Not because it also recognized the truth or wanted to encourage the Turkish public to learn more about the genocide, but because it wanted to look more democratic to the West. But still there is a danger that one would be sentenced if he openly speaks about the Armenian genocide in Turkey. Human rights activists in Turkey are thus taking immense risks by organizing or speaking out. At any time they could also be attacked, or even killed, by nationalists Turks hostile to Armenians. For example, the Turkish Nobel Laureate, Orhan Pamuk, got an official order for his books to be removed from the shelves of public libraries and burned after he referenced the Armenian genocide to a Swiss newspaper.

⁷⁰Message Sent by H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, to the Religious Ceremony Held in the Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul on 24 April 2015, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/message-sent-by-h_e_-mr_-recep-tayyip-erdogan_-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey_-to-the-religious-ceremony-held-in-the-arme.en.mfa, (accessed on October 8, 2019).

⁷¹"Armenians Main Targets of Hate Speech in Turkish Media", *Massis Post*, 14 June 2017, <https://massispost.com/2017/06/armenians-main-targets-hate-speech-turkish-media/>, (accessed on October 8, 2019).

Summing up, we can conclude that Turkish authorities use these narratives concerning the Genocide based on the needs and interests of the country at different times.

Every time a new state recognizes the Armenian genocide, Turkey pressures them not to do so. For example, Turkey recalled its ambassador to the Vatican for "consultations" just after Pope Francis referred to the mass killing of Armenians as the "first genocide of the twentieth century."⁷² However, it is noteworthy that such pressure is not always working and dozens of countries, including Argentina, France, Greece and Russia, have all officially recognized the Armenian genocide.

Another form of denialism, used in Turkey, is to manipulate statistics, downplaying the number of victims (or, in this case, the number of Armenians who lived in the Ottoman Empire in 1915), and destroy official documents. Thus, the estimates of the Armenian dead vary from 600,000 to two million, a United Nations Human Rights Sub-commission report in 1985 gives the figure of "at least one million."⁷³ But the important point in understanding a tragedy such as this is not the exact and accurate count of the number who died (that will never be known) but the fact that more than half the Armenian population died and the rest were driven from their ancestral homeland or forcibly Islamized. Another important point is that what befell the Armenians was by the will of the government.

Although a huge number of the general population participated in the plunder and massacres of Armenians, many Muslim leaders were shocked by what was happening, and thousands of Armenian women and children have been saved by compassionate individual Turks, Kurds, and Arabs.

⁷² David Willey, "Turkey anger at Pope Francis Armenian 'genocide' claim", *BBC News*, 12 April 2015, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-32272604>, (accessed on October 10, 2019).

⁷³Mr. C.L.C. Mubanga-Chipoya, "Report of the sub-commission on prevention of discrimination and protection of minorities", Geneva, 5-30 August 1985, United Nations Social and Economic Council, Commission on Human Rights, Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, Thirty-eighth session, E/CN.4/1986/5, E/CN.4/Sub.2/1985/57, 4 November 1985.

Conclusion

Although the Armenian Genocide took place 104 years ago and all the persons involved have since died, the Armenian genocide continues to play an important role in present-day international politics (it has left a lasting legacy). The horrors and trauma of 1915 still reflect in the lives of the all Armenians scattered across the world. The massacres of the Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1895-1923 not only cost almost two million Armenian lives but created massive trauma for many of those who survived.

The Armenian genocide is the main problem in Armenian-Turkish relations. Moreover, Turkey's entry into the European Union depends in part on the reopening of this border, which in turn also depends on the acknowledgement of the genocide.

By the end of the World War I, more than 90 percent of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were gone, and many traces of their former presence has been erased by the Turks. Thus, the Armenian Genocide laid the ground for the more-homogeneous nation-state that eventually became the Republic of Turkey. Despite the ongoing process of international condemnation of the Armenian Genocide, Turkey still severely disputes any suggestion that Ottoman forces committed genocide in 1915 and fights against recognition by all means, including distortion of history, means of propaganda, lobbying activities and other measures. It is saying that the deaths occurred as part of war in which Turks were also killed by Armenians. When Pope Francis and the European Parliament voiced agreement, Ankara withdrew its ambassador to the Vatican in protest and accused Rome of joining an anti-Turkish conspiracy.

Nevertheless, the effects of the Armenian Genocide can be seen throughout history, and are still felt today. We can say that the Genocide, more accurate its impunity, was "the start" or "the green light" for the other genocides of the century (Holocaust, Rwanda, Cambodia). One of the most glaring reminders of the violence shown towards the Armenians was the Holocaust in Germany during World War II. Hitler followed the Young Turks blueprint almost exactly, dehumanizing and scapegoating an economically successful racial and religious minority during a time of crisis.

Impunity of the Armenian Genocide inspired Adolf Hitler three decades later to carry out the atrocities of World War II. **On August 22, 1939, in preparation for the impending invasion of Poland, Hitler stated to Reichmarshal Hermann Goering and the commanding generals at Obersalzberg...**

“Our strength consists in our speed and in our brutality. Genghis Khan led millions of women and children to slaughter – with premeditation and a happy heart.

"Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?"⁷⁴

Maybe, if the organizers of the Armenian Genocide were punished and people had in fact remembered this tragedy, other genocides may have been avoided. Had the tragedy in the Ottoman Empire been fully understood throughout the global community, then perhaps the leaders of the world in the 1940s would have seen the warning signs, and prevented such a tragedy from happening again.

Actually, even nowadays there are a very fixed group of individuals (mainly in Turkey) who not only "do not speak of the Armenians", but deny the fact that a genocide occurred. Many Turks still claim that there was no crime committed against the Armenians or that the Armenians are guilty about what happened when openly fighting alongside the Triple Entente during the First World War and against the Ottoman Empire during the Balkan War. This view believes that the Turks were justified in their actions against the Armenians, and argue that very few were actually killed, rather, that they were simply deported from their homeland. Others concede that the Armenians did suffer great losses, but refuse to accept the fact that the atrocities were carried out by the Ottoman Empire and its military. Instead, they suggest that the Armenians were victims of pillaging Kurds who were in the area at the time.

Moreover, Turkish state and those few historians who reject the notion of genocide have argued that the tragedy was a result of reasonable and understandable response of a government to the rebellious population in time of war and mortal danger to the state's survival. Their arguments are not only surpassing but also shocking (in justifying killings of hundreds of thousands of children, women and elderly-"it was a civil war", "Armenians were collaborating with Russians"). Even now, in 21st century, the public mood of Turkish society, the mindset of the Turkish elite is ready to justify another mass murder.

Following the events in northern Syria, we can confidently say that Turkey has not changed its handwriting.

However, more than 20 countries (among them Russia, Argentina, France, Greece, Germany, Cyprus, Uruguay, Sweden), several international organizations, most independent scholars have described it as genocide. Several European countries ban the denial of the Holocaust or

⁷⁴ "Hitler and the Armenian Genocide", *The Genocide Education Project*, (no date available), <https://genocideeducation.org/background/hitler-and-the-armenian-genocide/>, (accessed on October 17, 2019).

the Armenian Genocide, while in Turkey referring to the mass killings of Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians and Maronites as genocides may be prosecuted under Article 301. Article 301 of the penal code, on "insulting Turkishness", has been used to prosecute prominent writers who highlight the mass killings of Armenians. Among them were Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk and Hrant Dink, who was later shot dead in January 2007.

The Armenian Genocide had horrible result. The Western Armenia was deprived of its native population-the Armenians, that used to be its permanent inhabitants from an ancient times. During the years of 1915-1922, 1 500 000 Armenians were massacred. Within one year, some 200 000 Christian Armenians were forcibly turned into Muslims. About 1 000 000 Armenians became refugees and were spread all over the world, and now form the Armenian Diaspora. The Armenian and other Christian population of 66 towns and some 2500 villages of Western Armenia was slaughtered. 2350 churches and monasteries were looted and destroyed, 1500 schools and colleges were ruined. The Armenians suffered a loss of 14.5 billion francs. Turkish government has sent 100mln marks (gold) to Berlin (money robbed from Armenians). Deposits of Armenians, that were kept in the Ottoman banks, as well as their movable and immovable property were also salvaged.

Today only 60,000 Armenians live in Turkey, a country of 80 million population.

More than 1.5 million Armenians had been wiped out from their historic homeland what is now eastern Turkey, as well as from the northern, southern, central, and western parts of Turkey. About 250,000 Assyrians were also massacred in southeastern Turkey during the same period. Then, it was the Pontic Greeks' turn to be eliminated from northern Turkey on the Black Sea coast. The Kurds were used extensively by the Ottoman state during the Armenian massacres.

Enver Pasha- One of the triumvirate rulers publicly declared on 19 May 1916... "The Ottoman Empire should be cleaned up of the Armenians and the Lebanese. We have destroyed the former by the sword, we shall destroy the latter through starvation." In reply to US Ambassador Morgenthau who was deploring the massacres against Armenians and attributing them to irresponsible subalterns and underlings in the distant provinces, Enver's reply was... "You are greatly mistaken. We have this country absolutely under our control. I have no desire to shift the blame onto our underlings and I am entirely willing to accept the responsibility myself for everything that has taken place."

"The nearest successful example [of collective denial] in the modern era is the 80 years of official denial by successive Turkish governments of the 1915-17 genocide against the Armenians in which 1.5 million people lost their lives. This denial has been sustained by deliberate propaganda,

lying and coverups, forging documents, suppression of archives, and bribing scholars." **Stanley Cohen, Professor of Criminology, Hebrew University, Jerusalem – (Law and Social Inquiry vol. 20, no. 1 (Winter 1995)).**

The whole plan of extermination was nothing less than a cold blooded, calculated political measure, having for its object the annihilation of a superior element in the population, which might prove troublesome, and to this must be added the motive of greed. **Fridtjof Nansen, Norwegian explorer, scientist, diplomat, humanitarian, and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.**

Due to the absence of transitional justice between the Turkish government and the Armenian people, Armenians grow up living with the anxiety that their culture and existence is still threatened. So for more than a century, Armenians — particularly those in the diaspora — have passed down this trauma and Armenian children have continued to be raised to distrust and resent Turks. Simultaneously, millions of Turks have been taught that there was never a genocide as Armenians have either been erased or painted as villains in textbooks.

Despite Turkey's efforts to deny the genocide of its Christian population, we cannot deny the reality. Continuing to do so makes it difficult for some Turks to accept the painful reality that their ancestors may have committed and covered up these atrocities, inhibiting Turkey from freeing itself from that chapter of history and turning towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

On the global stage, the continued denial of genocide has sent a horrific message to tyrants around the world that they can escape accountability for the right price, emboldening them to pursue atrocities.

And today, in the 21st century we can see the horrible consequences of impunity. We see how Turkey is continuing its policy of lie, falsification and permissiveness. What is Turkey doing now in Northern Syria is the consequence of permissiveness, is because the international community and the big states failed (or didn't want) to prevent and later condemn Turkish policy of massacres.

Armenian people worldwide are still waiting for Turkey to recognize the crime committed against them. Indeed, 104 years later, the scars left by the assaults can still be seen and felt. But it must be said that the horrors of 1915 have unified and united the Armenian diaspora, and led to a cultural, religious, and ethnic pride as strong as any in the world. The Armenian people were forged in the fire of genocide, but have passed that test and prevailed with flying colors. There are now more than twice as many ethnic Armenians worldwide as there were when the Turks attempted to annihilate them, which is a testament to the Armenian spirit and resilience.

The Genocide should be recognized and the damages repaired. The Turkish state, as the successor of the Ottoman Empire, has international juridical obligations. Responsibility for crimes under international law falls upon the state that commits them as well as its successor according to the principle of continuity and responsibility of states.

The crime of genocide has no place in society. Genocides should be punished regardless of when they occurred, in order to bring closure and justice to all survivors and their families and also to act as a deterrent for those considering committing genocide in the future.

NEVER AGAIN.....

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