

Pope Francis Commemorates 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide- “the first of the 20th Century”



Pope Francis chose this Sunday to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide by the [Young Turks](#) of the waning Ottoman Empire. He called it the first genocide of the 20th Century”. The AP [reported](#), that Turkish President Erdogan called “hateful “and “unacceptable.” He immediately ordered the recall of their Ambassador to the Holy See and had the Foreign Minister invite in the Papal Ambassador. The AP wrote:

Pope Francis on Sunday called the slaughter of Armenians by Ottoman Turks “the first genocide of the 20th century” and urged the international community to recognize it as such, sparking a diplomatic rift with Turkey at a delicate time in Christian-Muslim relations.

Armenian President Serge Sarkisian, who was on hand to mark the 100th anniversary of the slaughter at a Mass in St. Peter’s Basilica, praised the pope for calling a spade a spade in an interview with The Associated Press. But Turkey, which has long denied genocide took place, recalled its ambassador to the Holy See in protest.

“The pope’s statement, which is far from historic and legal truths, is unacceptable,” Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu tweeted. “Religious positions are not places where unfounded claims are made and hatred is stirred.”

Francis, who has close ties to the Armenian community from his days in Argentina, defended his pronouncement by saying it was his duty to honor the memory of the innocent men, women and children who were “senselessly” murdered by Ottoman Turks.

“Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it,” he said at the start of a Mass in the Armenian Catholic rite honoring the centenary.

In a subsequent message directed to all Armenians, Francis called on all heads of state and international organizations to recognize the truth of what transpired to prevent such “horrors” from happening again, and to oppose such crimes “without ceding to ambiguity or compromise.”

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Turkey’s embassy to the Holy See canceled a planned news conference for Sunday, presumably after learning that the pope would utter the word “genocide” over its objections. Instead, the Foreign Ministry in Ankara summoned the Vatican’s envoy, and then announced it was recalling its own ambassador to the Vatican for consultations.

In a statement, it said the Turkish people would not recognize the pope’s statement “which is controversial in every aspect, which is based on prejudice, which distorts history and reduces the pains suffered in Anatolia under the conditions of the First World War to members of just one religion.”

Our NER colleague, Dr. Richard L. Rubenstein wrote a chronicle of the Ottoman pogroms and genocides perpetrated against the Armenians in the late 19th Century and during World War I, [“The Armenian Genocide as Jihad”](#) (January 2015). Dr. Rubenstein is the author of seminal works about the Holocaust

and more recently, [*Jihad and Genocide*](#). Rubenstein's opening stanza of his article recalls the appalling depredations wreaked by Turkish and Kurdish auxiliaries:

There is a 1919 silent film about the Armenian genocide, "Ravished Armenia," originally produced in Hollywood using Turkish documentary footage. It was based on a book by a survivor, Aurora Mardiganian, who also starred in the production. The film originally consisted of nine reels, most of which have been lost.

[Watch](#) this You Tube video of the 1919 film, *Ravished Armenia*:

Although low-definition, there is one terrible scene toward the end of the clip that is especially difficult to watch. Seldom, if ever, have I viewed a film scene that matches this one in sadistic obscenity. It is a crucifixion scene, but unlike Christian images of Christ on the cross that express symbolically the triumph of eternal life over evanescent human pain, this film's crucifixion scene carried a very different symbolic meaning. There are eight crosses in a row to which are nailed eight naked, young Armenian women. After the film offers a panoramic view of all of the crosses and their victims, it focuses on a single sufferer. Nailed to the cross, she is helplessly alive. One could tell by her eyes and facial movements that her cognitive functions were unimpaired as she *awaited the painful doom of her crucifixion*.

The terrible scenes of the deportations, confiscations, sadistic brutality, rapine, outright murder of helpless Armenians, and the crucifixion of the Armenian maidens could not have been filmed without the involvement and consent of Turkish authorities.

The perpetrators took the most sacred symbol of Christendom and turned it into a blasphemous obscenity, symbolically proclaiming absolute Muslim dominance. Nevertheless, something else was involved: women are the child bearers. Their wombs carry the next generation. No words were necessary. The message was clear: "We express our utter contempt for you and your religion. We intend to destroy your future. You have no human rights. We can do with you whatever we wish."

Nevertheless, shortly after the film was released, Turks apparently had second thoughts about what could be made available publically. Since then, for almost a century, Turkish governments have vehemently rejected the charge that Turks committed *genocide* against the Armenians. The most Turks have been willing to acknowledge is that *both* the Turks and Armenians inflicted wartime harm on each other, thereby arguing for moral equivalence between Turkish genocidal violence and rare instances of Armenian defensive action. Admitting that there were massacres, Turkish authorities have insisted that the number of Armenians killed has nevertheless been greatly exaggerated. Moreover, in spite of the publication of a host of well-documented eye-witness reports and testimonies, Turkish governments have used their diplomatic influence to prevent governments, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Israel and others, from taking any action that would validate the Armenian claim that a nearly successful attempt to exterminate the Armenians of the Ottoman empire took place during the first World War.

In view of the fact that post-war German governments have acknowledged the role of National Socialist Germany in planning and implementing the extermination of Europe's Jews, why have successive Turkish governments refuse to tread a similar path with regard to the Armenian victims?

[...]

This suggestion is in accord with the first words in Vahakn N. Dadrian's magisterial study of the Armenian genocides. Dadrian begins: **"As a first step toward a full analysis of the nationality conflicts [in the Ottoman Empire], it is necessary to examine Islam as a major determinant in the genesis and escalation of these conflicts."**



The massacre of 1.5 million Armenians in the midst of WWI was largely met with indifference by the Christian world. The exception was the American Committee for Syrian and Armenian Relief, now [Near East Foundation](#) that created refugee centers for Armenia orphan children. This despite information provided conveyed to the US State Department by the American Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, [Henry Morgenthau, Senior](#). President's Wilson Jewish appointee who served in that post during the period from 1913 until his resignation in 1916. He wrote a personal account in [Ambassador's Story](#), about his confrontation with Ottoman officials over eye witness reports he received from Consuls in Van and Aleppo of the heinous crimes committed by Turkish and Kurdish forces. those reports to his friend Aldolph Ochs, publisher of the *New York Times*. His book has graphic photographs of the devastation wreaked upon the country's Armenian minority. Morgenthau also noted the indifference of the German Ambassador an ally of the Ottoman Turks during this great slaughter. In a 1915 telegram to the US State Department, Morgenthau "described the massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as a "campaign of race extermination." In his book. Morgenthau wrote:

The real purpose of the deportation was robbery and

destruction; it really represented a new method of massacre. When the Turkish authorities gave the orders for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race; they understood this well, and, in their conversations with me, they made no particular attempt to conceal the fact. Henry Morgenthau, [Ambassador Morgenthau's Story](#) pg. 309.

As noted by Dr. Rubenstein, this first genocide of the 20th Century was used by Hitler as justification for the Final Solution for the murder in unspeakable ways of Six Million European Jewish men, women and children. The depredations committed against Jews during the Shoah were not dissimilar from the outrages perpetrated on Armenian throughout the Ottoman Empire, although with an important difference- the organization of a network of slave labor and death camps using technology. The reports of the Armenian slaughter look eerily similar to those of the Islamic State against Orthodox and Assyrian Christians in both Syria and Iraq 100 years later. During WWII it was left to the Ambassador's son, Henry Morgenthau, Jr. ,President Roosevelt's Treasury Secretary , who with his able staff , brought about the creation of the [War Refugee Board \(WRB\)](#) to save an estimated 250,000 Jews who fell into allied hands. The WRB enlisted the aid of Swedish businessman Raoul Wallenberg and others in the diplomatic community that used funds for the [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee](#) to safe house 90,000 Hungarian Jews in Budapest.

100 years after the Armenian Genocide Islamist President Erdogan perpetuates official amnesia conveying it as hateful to Turkish nationalism, when in fact it was a Jihad perpetrated by reformer predecessors of the Young Turks, Grand Vizier Talaat Pasha, Enver Pasha and Djemal Pasha.

Hitler, who admired Islam and Jihad, used the Turkish destruction of Armenians as the model for the Holocaust against the hated infidel Jews. He [reportedly](#) told his

friend, the German Muslim convert Ached Huber, "The only religion I respect is Islam. The only prophet I admire is the Prophet Muhammad."