



Amherst Massachusetts
OFFICE OF THE SELECT BOARD

Select Board
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Armenian Proclamation
April 2015

Whereas, from 1915 to 1923, the government of the Ottoman Empire systematically planned and carried out the murders of an estimated 1.5 million Armenians living in Asia Minor and historic West Armenia, and

Whereas, by 1923, this mass extermination and the accompanying atrocities had resulted in the virtual elimination of the Armenian population and culture in historic Asia Minor and West Armenia, which has become known as the Armenian Genocide, and

Whereas, the first mass murders began on the night of April 24, 1915, when the Turkish government arrested more than 250 Armenian community leaders in Constantinople, the Ottoman Empire's capital city, and

Whereas, most of the prominent educators, clergy, writers, lawyers, intellectuals, and other public figures of the Armenian community were summarily executed, and

Whereas, most of the adult males were either conscripted into the Turkish army to fight on the side of the country that was killing their people or were murdered on the spot, and

Whereas, large numbers of Armenian old men, women, and children, including babies in arms were either killed or forcibly deported to the Syrian desert, during which deportation many died either en route, at the hands of government-aligned gangs, or from dehydration and starvation in the desert, and

Whereas, in May 1915, the Allied Powers of France, Great Britain, and Russia issued a joint statement charging the government in Constantinople with committing crimes "against humanity and civilization," and

Whereas, Raphael Lemkin, the initial drafter of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the originator of the term "genocide," recognized the Armenian Genocide as the type of crime the United Nations should prevent through the establishment of international standards, and

Whereas, historians cite the Armenian Genocide as a forerunner of later genocidal massacres, including the Holocaust, the Cambodian Killing Fields, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur, now therefore be it

Resolved: we, the Select Board of the Town of Amherst do hereby urge all residents to mark this occasion and to participate fittingly in its observance by honoring the memories of the victims and the courage and resilience of the survivors,

Beginning with a ceremony to be held in front of Town Hall on April 30,

And further, by taking to heart the lessons of this tragedy as we commit ourselves to upholding the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, throughout this centennial year and beyond.

Finally, be it resolved that the Town of Amherst be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Charlie Baker, State Senators Edward Markey and Elizabeth Warren. U.S. Representative James McGovern, President Barack Obama, the Armenian National Committee of America and the Armenian Assembly of America.

VOTED AND DATED this 27th day of April, 2015.

Alisa Brewer, Chair

James Wald, Vice Chair

Andrew Steinberg, Clerk

Constance Kruger

Douglas Slaughter