

R 200
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Enacted 04/15/2021

H O U S E R E S O L U T I O N

**PROCLAIMING APRIL 24, 2021, AS "ARMENIAN GENOCIDE REMEMBRANCE DAY" TO
COMMEMORATE THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE OF 1915 TO 1923, AND IN HONOR OF
ARMENIAN-AMERICANS**

Introduced By: Representatives Kazarian, Corvese, Shekarchi, Blazejewski, Fenton-Fung, Potter, Baginski,
Williams, Hawkins, and Alzate

Date Introduced: April 15, 2021

WHEREAS, The Armenian Genocide was conceived and carried out by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and resulted in the deportation of nearly 2,000,000 Armenians, of whom 1,500,000 men, women, and children were killed, and the remaining 500,000 survived but were expelled from their homes. This act succeeded in the elimination of the Armenians from their historic ancestral homeland where they had resided for over 2,500 years; and

WHEREAS, On May 24, 1915, for the first time ever, the Allied Powers of England, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement explicitly charging another government of committing "a crime against humanity"; and

WHEREAS, This joint statement declared, "the Allied Governments announce publicly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold personally responsible for these crimes all members of the Ottoman Government, as well as those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres"; and

WHEREAS, United States Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, Sr. explicitly described the policy of the Ottoman Empire's government to the United States Department of State as "a campaign of race extermination," and on July 16, 1915, was informed by United States Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the "Department approves your procedure . . . to stop Armenian persecution"; and

WHEREAS, The post-World War I Turkish government indicted the top leaders involved in the organization and execution of the Armenian Genocide and in the "massacre and destruction of the Armenians," and in a series of court-martials, officials of the Young Turk regime were charged, tried and convicted, for organizing and executing massacres against the Armenian people; and

WHEREAS, In 1948, the United Nations War Crimes Commission invoked the Armenian Genocide as "precisely . . . one of the types of acts which the modern term 'crimes against humanity' is intended to cover" as a precedent for the Nuremberg tribunals; and

WHEREAS, The United States National Archives and Record Administration holds extensive and thorough documentation on the Armenian Genocide, especially in its holdings under Record Group 59 of the United States Department of State, files 867.00 and 867.40, which are open and widely available to the public and interested institutions; and

WHEREAS, The United States Holocaust Memorial Council, an independent federal agency, unanimously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum would include the Armenian Genocide in the museum and has since done so; and

WHEREAS, When one enters the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, there is an exhibit depicting Adolf Hitler, who on ordering his military commanders to attack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed objections by stating "[w]ho, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?", thus setting the stage for the Holocaust; and

WHEREAS, In 1918, after the fall of the Russian Empire, the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and the First Republic of Armenia both declared independence; however, shortly thereafter, they became part of the Soviet Union. The modern Republic of Azerbaijan once again proclaimed its independence in August of 1991, shortly before the dissolution of the USSR. Within its borders, however, the predominantly Armenian enclave known as the Republic of Artsakh officially voted to become part of Armenia; and

WHEREAS, Azerbaijan sought to suppress the separatist movement, while Armenia backed it. Turkey has close ties to Azerbaijan and was the first nation to recognize Azerbaijan's independence in 1991. In 1993, Turkey, in addition to engaging in numerous hostilities, shut its border with Armenia in support of Azerbaijan during the war over the Republic of Artsakh; and

WHEREAS, In Turkey's continuing aggression and genocide of Armenians that began more than 100 years ago, an armed conflict between Azerbaijan, with military support provided by Turkey, and the Republic of Artsakh resulted in Armenia being forced to return many of the surrounding territories it had occupied for decades, and although current ceasefire and negotiations were agreed upon, Azerbaijan continues to seek unilateral concessions through threats of the use of force; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby recognizes April 24, 2021, as "Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day" in the State of Rhode Island; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House hereby respectfully requests the President of the United States and the United States Congress to call on the government of Turkey to face history and acknowledge this crime of genocide committed by the Ottoman Turks in 1915, and urge the Turkish government to make restitution for the loss of lives, confiscated properties, and general unlawful deportations, separating the indigenous population from their homeland; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this House expresses its deepest sympathy to the Armenian-American community of Rhode Island and assures them that this genocide will always be commemorated and never forgotten; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Honorable Joseph Biden, President of the United States, the Rhode Island Congressional Delegation, the Governor of the State of Rhode Island, the Armenian Assembly of America in Washington, and the Armenian National Committee in Washington.

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