

An unrecognized genocide is repeated genocide

By Robert Kalantari

President Obama during his 2008 campaign told the world, "My firmly held conviction that the Armenian Genocide is not an allegation, a personal opinion, or a point of view, but rather a widely documented fact supported by an overwhelming body of historical evidence."

"The facts are undeniable. An official policy that calls on diplomats to distort the historical facts is an untenable policy," Obama wrote. "As President I will recognize the Armenian Genocide."

Armenian People in the United States and around the world are still waiting for the president to fulfill his promise.

Speaking at the Mass on Sunday April 12, 2015, Pope Francis defined the slaughter of 1.5 million Armenians as "the first genocide of the 20th century," quoting the statement made by John Paul II. He continued his speech acknowledging the other genocides of the 20th century.

"The remaining two were perpetrated by Nazism and Stalinism," Francis said. "And more recently there have been other mass killings, like those in Cambodia, Rwanda, Burundi and Bosnia."

Pope Francis said it was "necessary, and indeed a duty," to remember the Armenians killed, "for whenever memory fades, it means that evil allows wounds to fester. Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!"

In 1915, leaders of the Turkish government set in motion a plan to expel and massacre Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire. By the early 1920's, when the massacres and deportations finally ended, some 1.5 million of Turkey's Armenians were dead, with many more forcibly removed from the country.

As David Fromkin put it in his widely praised history of World War I and its aftermath in the text, "A Peace to End All Peace"; "Rape and beating were commonplace. Those who were not killed at once were driven through mountains and deserts without food, drink or shelter. Hundreds of thousands of Armenians eventually succumbed or were killed."

The man who invented the word "genocide" Raphael Lemkin, a lawyer of Polish-Jewish origin was moved to investigate the attempt to eliminate an entire people by accounts of the massacres of Armenians. He coined the term "genocide" in 1943, applying it to Nazi Germany and the Jews in a book published a year later, "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe."

Today, most historians, including numerous Turkish historians and scholars call this event genocide. However, the Turkish government does not acknowledge these mass killings as genocide, and in fact they have passed a law that criminalizes any mention of Armenian genocide in Turkey. Sadly enough, our own government has not acknowledged this crime as genocide, in spite of the fact that over 20 countries, the Vatican, and 43 out of 50 states have officially recognized this event and genocide.

In the past 30 years several bills to recognize the Armenian genocide have been introduced by the congress, but none have passed. A similar bill was recently introduced in 2009. However, once again, our leader then and now, President Barack Obama and the Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton campaigned so hard to prevent the US Congress acknowledging that the Ottoman Turkish massacre of 1.5 million Armenians as genocide.

When Hillary Clinton was in the senate, she had cosponsored successive Armenian Genocide resolutions since 2002. But responding to a question from a participant of a Town Hall Meeting on January 28, 2012 in CA she said, recognition of the Armenian Genocide by the US “opens a door that is a very dangerous one to go through.” This is the same Hillary Clinton who, four years ago, pledged that she would recognize the Genocide as President of the United States.

The rationale for such an irresponsible act by our current and past leaders, (with the exception of president Ronald Regan, who did in his speech mentioned genocide) is that if the U.S. acknowledges the Armenian genocide, then Turkey, “our ally” will retaliate and not help the U.S. in the region. Based on the past, we all know that Turkey has always shown their true colors and have not supported any U.S. missions in the area.

As we all know, history will repeat itself if crimes are not punished and acknowledged. Turkey did not punish the perpetrators of this crime when it happened, and they have not recognized this horrific crime. An unrecognized crime is a repeated crime.

April 24 is the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, the first genocide of the 20th century. World leaders, who care about preventing such crimes, will gather in Armenia to commemorate the anniversary of this sad, unpunished crime forgotten by some nations. We hope the 100 year anniversary will open the eyes of those who care about the human race. We hope that once and for all there will be acknowledgement and recognition of this crime as genocide and more importantly for Turkey to accept the evil crime of their past. As Pope Francis said, **“Concealing or denying evil is like allowing a wound to keep bleeding without bandaging it!”**

To find out more about this horrific event, please search the web about the Armenian Genocide. The following links provide additional information:

<http://www.armenian-genocide.org/genocidfaq.html>

<http://www.history.com/topics/armenian-genocide>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/robert-fisk-living-proof-of-the-armenian-genocide-1918367.html>