

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 155

Calling upon the President to provide in a collection all United States records related to the Armenian genocide and the consequences of the failure to enforce the judgments of the Turkish courts against the responsible officials, and to deliver the collection to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, the library of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and to the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 28, 1999

Mr. RADANOVICH (for himself, Mr. ACKERMAN, Mr. ANDREWS, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BILBRAY, Mr. BLAGOJEVICH, Mr. BLILEY, Mrs. CAPPS, Mr. CAPUANO, Mr. CLAY, Mr. COSTELLO, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. DIXON, Mr. DOOLEY of California, Ms. ESHOO, Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey, Mr. HEFLEY, Mr. HINCHEY, Mr. HORN, Mr. KASICH, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, Mr. KILDEE, Mr. KING, Mr. KLECZKA, Mr. KNOLLENBERG, Mr. LARSON, Mr. LEVIN, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCHUGH, Mr. MCKEON, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. MEEHAN, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. MOAKLEY, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mrs. MORELLA, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. OBEY, Mr. OLVER, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. PORTER, Mr. ROGAN, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. ROYCE, Mr. RUSH, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. SHERMAN, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. TIERNEY, Mr. THOMAS, Mr. VISCLOSKEY, Mr. WAXMAN, Ms. WOOLSEY, and Mr. WYNN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Government Reform, and in addition to the Committee on International Relations, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

RESOLUTION

Calling upon the President to provide in a collection all

United States records related to the Armenian genocide and the consequences of the failure to enforce the judgments of the Turkish courts against the responsible officials, and to deliver the collection to the Committee on International Relations of the House of Representatives, the library of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and to the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan, Armenia.

1 *Resolved,*

2 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

3 This resolution may be cited as the “United States
4 Record on the Armenian Genocide Resolution”.

5 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

6 The Congress finds the following:

7 (1) The Armenian genocide was conceived and
8 carried out by Ottoman Turkish Governments from
9 1915 to 1923, resulting in the killing of 1,500,000
10 Armenian men, women, and children, the deporta-
11 tion of more than 500,000 survivors, and practically
12 succeeded in the elimination of the over 2,500-year
13 Armenian presence of Armenians in their historic
14 homeland.

15 (2) On May 24, 1915, the Allied Powers, Eng-
16 land, France, and Russia, jointly issued a statement
17 explicitly charging for the first time ever another
18 government of committing “a crime against human-
19 ity”.

1 (3) This joint statement stated “[i]n view of
2 these new crimes of Turkey against humanity and
3 civilization, the Allied Governments announce pub-
4 licly to the Sublime Porte that they will hold person-
5 ally responsible for these crimes all members of the
6 Ottoman Government, as well as those of their
7 agents who are implicated in such massacres”.

8 (4) The post-World War I Turkish Government
9 indicted the top leaders involved in the “organization
10 and execution” of the Armenian genocide and in the
11 “massacre and destruction of the Armenians”.

12 (5) In a series of courts-martial, officials of the
13 Young Turk Regime were tried and convicted, as
14 charged, for organizing and executing massacres
15 against the Armenian people.

16 (6) The chief organizers of the Armenian geno-
17 cide, Minister of War Enver, Minister of the Interior
18 Talaat, and Minister of the Navy Jemal were all
19 condemned to death for their crimes, however, the
20 verdicts of the courts were not enforced.

21 (7) The Armenian genocide and these domestic
22 judicial failures are documented with overwhelming
23 evidence in the national archives of Austria, France,
24 Germany, Great Britain, Russia, the United States,
25 the Vatican and many other countries, and this vast

1 body of evidence attests to the same facts, the same
2 events, and the same consequences.

3 (8) The national archives of Turkey should also
4 include all of the records pertaining to the indict-
5 ment, trial, and conviction of the Ottoman authori-
6 ties responsible for the Armenian genocide.

7 (9) The Honorable Henry Morgenthau, United
8 States Ambassador to the Ottoman Turkish Empire
9 from 1913 to 1916, organized and led protests by
10 officials of many countries, among them the allies of
11 the Ottoman Turkish Empire, against the Armenian
12 genocide.

13 (10) Ambassador Morgenthau explicitly de-
14 scribed to the Department of State the policy of the
15 Young Turk government as “a campaign of race ex-
16 termination”, and was instructed on July 16, 1915,
17 by Secretary of State Robert Lansing that the “De-
18 partment approves your procedure . . . to stop Ar-
19 menian persecution”.

20 (11) Senate Concurrent Resolution 12 of Feb-
21 ruary 9, 1916, resolved that “the President of the
22 United States be respectfully asked to designate a
23 day on which the citizens of this country may give
24 expression to their sympathy by contributing funds
25 now being raised for the relief of the Armenians”,

1 who at the time were enduring “starvation, disease,
2 and untold suffering”.

3 (12) President Wilson concurred and also en-
4 couraged the formation of the organization known as
5 Near East Relief, chartered by an Act of Congress,
6 which contributed some \$113,000,000 from 1915 to
7 1930 to aid the Armenian genocide survivors, includ-
8 ing 132,000 orphans who became foster children of
9 the American people.

10 (13) Senate Resolution 359, dated May 13,
11 1920, stated in part, “the testimony adduced at the
12 hearings conducted by the subcommittee of the Sen-
13 ate Committee on Foreign Relations have clearly es-
14 tablished the truth of the reported massacres and
15 other atrocities from which the Armenian people
16 have suffered”.

17 (14) The resolution followed the April 13, 1920,
18 report to the Senate of the American Military Mis-
19 sion to Armenia led by General James Harbord, that
20 stated “[m]utilation, violation, torture, and death
21 have left their haunting memories in a hundred
22 beautiful Armenian valleys, and the traveler in that
23 region is seldom free from the evidence of this most
24 colossal crime of all the ages”.

1 (15) Setting the stage for the Holocaust, Adolf
 2 Hitler, on ordering his military commanders to at-
 3 tack Poland without provocation in 1939, dismissed
 4 objections by saying “[w]ho, after all, speaks today
 5 of the annihilation of the Armenians?”.

6 (16) Raphael Lemkin, who coined the term
 7 “genocide” in 1944, and who was the earliest pro-
 8 ponent of the Genocide Convention, invoked the Ar-
 9 menian case as a definitive example of genocide in
 10 the 20th century.

11 (17) Raphael Lemkin described the crime as
 12 “the systematic destruction of whole national, racial
 13 or religious groups. The sort of thing Hitler did to
 14 the Jews and the Turks did to the Armenians”.

15 (18) The first resolution on genocide adopted
 16 by the United Nations at Lemkin’s urging, the De-
 17 cember 11, 1946, United Nations General Assembly
 18 resolution (96–1) and the United Nations Genocide
 19 Convention itself recognized the Armenian genocide
 20 as the type of crime the United Nations intended to
 21 prevent by codifying existing standards.

22 (19) In 1948 the United Nations War Crimes
 23 Commission invoked the Armenian genocide
 24 “precisely . . . one of the types of acts which the
 25 modern term ‘crimes against humanity’ is intended

1 to cover” as a precedent for the Nuremberg tribu-
 2 nals.

3 (20) The commission stated that “[t]he provi-
 4 sions of Article 230 of the Peace Treaty of Sévres
 5 were obviously intended to cover, in conformity with
 6 the Allied note of 1915 . . . , offenses which had
 7 been committed on Turkish territory against persons
 8 of Turkish citizenship, though of Armenian or Greek
 9 race. This article constitutes therefore a precedent
 10 for Article 6c and 5c of the Nuremberg and Tokyo
 11 Charters, and offers an example of one of the cat-
 12 egories of ‘crimes against humanity’ as understood
 13 by these enactments.”.

14 (21) The United Nations Commission on
 15 Human Rights adopted in 1985 a report entitled
 16 “Study of the Questions of the Prevention and Pun-
 17 ishment of the Crime of Genocide”, which stated
 18 “[t]he Nazi aberration has unfortunately not been
 19 the only case of genocide in the twentieth century.
 20 Among other examples which can be cited as quali-
 21 fying are . . . the Ottoman massacre of Armenians
 22 in 1915–1916”.

23 (22) This report also explained that “[a]t least
 24 1 million, and possibly well over half of the Arme-
 25 nian population, are reliably estimated to have been

1 killed or death marched by independent authorities
2 and eye-witnesses. This is corroborated by reports in
3 United States, German and British archives and of
4 contemporary diplomats in the Ottoman Empire, in-
5 cluding those of its ally Germany”.

6 (23) The tragedy of the Armenian genocide has
7 been acknowledged by countries and international
8 bodies such as Argentina, Belgium, Canada, the
9 Council of Europe, Cyprus, the European Par-
10 liament, France, Great Britain, Greece, Lebanon,
11 Russia, the United Nations, the United States, and
12 Uruguay.

13 (24) The United States Holocaust Memorial
14 Council, an independent Federal agency, unani-
15 mously resolved on April 30, 1981, that the United
16 States Holocaust Memorial Museum would include
17 the Armenian genocide in the Museum and has since
18 done so.

19 (25) President Reagan in proclamation number
20 4838, dated April 22, 1981, stated in part “like the
21 genocide of the Armenians before it, and the geno-
22 cide of the Cambodians, which followed it—and like
23 too many other persecutions of too many other peo-
24 ple—the lessons of the holocaust must never be for-
25 gotten”.

1 (26) In 1988 President Bush, speaking of the
2 Armenian genocide, stated “we must consciously and
3 conscientiously recognize the genocides of the past—
4 the enormous tragedies that have darkened this cen-
5 tury and that haunt us still. We must not only com-
6 memorate the courage of the victims and of their
7 survivors, but we must also remind ourselves that
8 civilization cannot be taken for granted . . . We
9 must all be vigilant against this most heinous crime
10 against humanity”.

11 (27) President Bush stated further “[t]he
12 United States must acknowledge the attempted
13 genocide of the Armenian people in the last years of
14 the Ottoman Empire, based on the testimony of sur-
15 vivors, scholars, and indeed our own representatives
16 at the time, if we are to insure that such horrors are
17 not repeated”.

18 (28) On August 13, 1992, President Clinton
19 stated “[t]he Genocide of 1915, years of communist
20 dictatorship, and the devastating earthquake of
21 1988 have caused great suffering in Armenia during
22 this century”.

23 (29) Reviewing an aberrant 1982 expression
24 (later retracted) by the Department of State assert-
25 ing that the facts of the Armenian genocide may be

1 ambiguous, the United States Court of Appeals for
2 the District of Columbia in 1993, after a review of
3 documents pertaining to the policy record of the
4 United States, noted that the assertion on ambiguity
5 in the United States record about the Armenian
6 genocide “contradicted longstanding United States
7 policy and was eventually retracted”.

8 (30) Despite the international recognition and
9 affirmation of the Armenian genocide, the failure of
10 the domestic and international authorities to punish
11 those responsible for the Armenian genocide is a
12 reason why similar genocides have recurred and may
13 recur in the future, and that a proper judicial and
14 firm response, holding the guilty accountable and re-
15 quiring the prompt enforcement of verdicts would
16 have spared humanity needless suffering.

17 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

18 The House of Representatives calls upon the Presi-
19 dent to provide, not later than 6 months after the date
20 of the adoption of this resolution, in a collection all United
21 States records related to the Armenian genocide and the
22 consequences of the failure to enforce the judgments of
23 the Turkish courts against the responsible officials, to—

24 (1) the Committee on International Relations of
25 the House of Representatives;

1 (2) the library of the United States Holocaust
2 Memorial Museum for incorporation into its holdings
3 of official documentation on genocide and for pur-
4 poses of public awareness and education; and

5 (3) the Armenian Genocide Museum in
6 Yerevan, Armenia, in order to document and affirm
7 the United States record of protest and recognition
8 of this crime against humanity.

