

21 April 2007

The Right Honourable Tony Blair
The Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
SW1A 2AA



'ENDING DENIAL IN THE UK'

CRAG
Northumberland House
11 The Pavement
Popes Lane
London
W5 4NG

Dear Prime Minister:

This week, Armenians worldwide commemorate the 92nd Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide that took place under cover of World War I between 1915 and 1923. Across all continents, from the United States to France, from Brussels to the Lebanon, and from Argentina and Chile to Australia and Hungary, Armenians and their friends pray in memory of those Armenians in Ottoman Turkey who lost their lives at the time because they were viewed by the Ottoman Turkish rulers as being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Tel: 020 8747 1465
Fax: 020 8994 7363
Email: info@24April.org
www.crag.org.uk

Committee of
Armenian Community
and Church Council
of Great Britain

Here in the United Kingdom, the Armenian British community, alongside its friends and supporters, also commemorate those events with prayer, dignity, poignancy, memory and even silence. Whether in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff, Nottingham-on-Trent, Exeter, Manchester ; Isle of White or elsewhere, we come together - alongside our political and religious representatives - to stress that genocide is not the answer to any problem.

Despite the huge outpouring of angst, let alone our repeated submissions, Her Majesty's Government still persists in its refusal to recognise this genocide. We always get replies that express "understanding" for the massacres that took place against Armenians, but the process stops dead in its tracks at that stage. Is it that Armenians could be expended in the human detritus of power politics and geo-strategic interests?

Prime Minister, your Government claims there is no historical evidence that the Armenian experience qualifies as genocide. That is surprising indeed when the foremost International Association of Genocide Scholars (as the enclosed letter they addressed to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan states unequivocally) has underlined that there was genocide perpetrated against Armenians. Besides, what more historical evidence is required in the light of those assertions by British, American and Israeli international scholars, historians and experts in the field of genocide such as Yehuda Bauer, Frank Chalk, Yisrael Charny, Helen Fein, Kurt Jonassohn, Ben Kiernan, Robert J Lifton, Deborah Lipstadt, Eric Markusen, Robert Melson, RJ Rummel, Robert Smith, Donald Bloxham, Mark Levene and Own Dudley Edwards? Are we to understand they are unreliable authorities, and that the Blue Book commissioned by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office on the treatment of Armenians during WWI was moreover false and unrepresentative of truth or reality?

International affirmation and official recognition of the Armenian Genocide continues to grow. The Legislative body of British Columbia in Canada was the most recent to acknowledge the truth in 2006. Isn't it high time that the Government in the UK took a more responsible role in the process of recognition and convinced the Turkish leadership and your close allies, the United States of America and Israeli governments that you actually can make the world a better place for Humanity, by putting an end to your shameful denial of the Armenian Genocide, the First Genocide of 20th Century, and through official recognition take a further step towards acknowledgment and the development of strategic and tactical means for prevention of genocide in the world. Isn't it time to stop the endless human suffering in Darfur?

You could also take advantage of the opportunity to convince the Turkish Government that acknowledging the truth and historical responsibility will in the long run benefit Turkey and its future by bringing them closer to European values.

The response received through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office do not in any way provide satisfactory answers to our previous correspondence. The Armenian British Community would appreciate it greatly to hear your views on the above subject.

Looking forward to you response.

Yours sincerely

Raffi Sarkissian
Chair - *Campaign for Recognition of the Armenian Genocide*