



Armenian National Committee of Canada

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Canada's Prime Minister Reaffirms Recognition of the Armenian Genocide

Canadian-Armenians, members of Parliament and other Genocide Victim Nations Commemorate the Armenian Genocide

Ottawa—The Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Stephan Harper, during the Commemoration of the 92nd anniversary of the Armenian Genocide on Parliament Hill, reaffirmed his last year's recognition of the Armenian Genocide.

Hon. Jason Kenney, Secretary of State, Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity, read the Prime Minister's message to the dignitaries and over 1,000 Armenians who had gathered from all over Canada to commemorate the memory of the 1.5 million Armenians who fell victim Turkey's intolerance, hatred and xenophobia in 1915.

In his message, titled "Statement of the Prime Minister on the Day of Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide," Mr. Harper said: "On this day we remember the terrible loss of life during the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1915, and in particular the horrific suffering endured by the Armenian people.

"Last year I reminded all Canadians that both Houses of Parliament have adopted resolutions recognizing the first genocide of the twentieth century... This is a day we acknowledge solemnly, to guide us towards a better future.

"I join with you today in remembering the past and in sharing hope for a future based on peace and mutual respect."

Over 30 members of the House of Parliament and the Senate, in addition to former politicians, intellectuals, academicians, journalists, and human rights activists, attended the commemoration.

The commemoration commenced with the national anthems of Canada and Armenia by the Homentemen Boy Scout band. A moment of silence for all victims of genocides followed.

An interdenominational prayer and requiem was conducted by Msgr. Gervais, the Archbishop of Ottawa, Archbishop Khajag Hagopian, Bishop Bagrat Galestianian, Msgr. Georges Zabarian, Archbshihop Souren Kataroian, and Rev. Mher Khatchikian.

Jean Megurditchian, president, Armenian National Committee of Canada, relayed the Canadian-Armenian community's gratitude for the Prime Minister's courageous and principled stand and reaffirmation of his last year's recognition. He also thanked the house of Commons and the Senate.

Regional Chapters

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After the reading of the Prime Minister's message, MP John Cannis read the Official Opposition Leader, Stephane Dion's message. Gilles Duceppe, the Bloc Quebecois leader followed with his remarks. The New Democratic Party Leader's message was delivered by Alexa MacDonough. Gary Goodyear delivered Canada-Armenia Parliamentary friendship group's message.

Jason Kenney, Jim Karygiannis, Vivian Barbot, and Alexa MacDonough joined Diran Terzian, Knar Bohdjalian--two survivors from the Genocide--and relatives of Genocide survivors, to lay wreaths around the Centennial Flame, in memory of the victims.

Hilda Tchoboian, the keynote speaker and Chairwoman of the European-Armenian Federation for Justice and Democracy, emphasized the importance of being vigilant against the Turkish Government's denial of the Armenian Genocide. Tchoboian also exposed the Turkish Government's shallow attempt to divert the attention of the international community from the recognition through disingenuous proposals such as the creation of historians' commission to study the Armenian Genocide.

Representatives of the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Tutsi community of Rwanda, and the people of Darfur addressed the gathering, recalling their own people's experience with Holocaust and Genocide. They pledged their solidarity with the Armenian People.

The suffering of Armenian Genocide victims was relayed by former Senator Raymone Setlakwe, whose father survived the 1894 massacres and by Alex Aghadjanian, grandson of Genocide survivor Naida Aghadjanian.

At the end of the commemoration participants laid carnations around the Centennial Flame.

The same day the House of Commons observed a moment of silence to commemorate the Armenian Genocide.

The ANCC is the largest and the most influential Canadian-Armenian grassroots political organization. Working in coordination with a network of offices, chapters, and supporters throughout Canada and affiliated organizations around the world, the ANCC actively advances the concerns of the Canadian-Armenian community on a broad range of issues.

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