

Press Release ESU welcomes the Recognition of the Armenian Genocide-Sayfo by US House of Representatives

2019-10-30

On 29 October, the US House of Representatives, with an overwhelming majority, passed Resolution H.Res.296, in which the House recognizes and condemns the Genocide of 1915 on Armenian, Syriac and Pontus-Greek Christians, planned and perpetrated by Ottoman-Turkish rule: “Whereas the United States has a proud history of recognizing and condemning the Armenian Genocide, the killing of 1.5 million Armenians by the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923, and providing relief to the survivors of the campaign of genocide against Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Syrians, Arameans, Maronites, and other Christians;”

The Genocide of 1915 perpetrated by Ottoman-Turkish rule - in collaboration with local Kurdish tribes in what is now Southeast Turkey - against Armenians, Pontus-Greeks and Syrians resulted in the massacre of more than one and half million innocent souls. Hundreds of thousands had to endure hardships under (death) marches south to the Syrian desert and tens of thousands of women and orphaned children were taken and Islamised. The genocide of 1915 caused the social, cultural and economic destruction of Armenians, Syrians and Pontus-Greeks in current day Turkey. It is a recognition, which comes at a time when indigenous peoples as the Syrians (Arameans-Assyrians-Chaldeans) and other vulnerable groups face violence, massacre, displacement and decimation in Syria by the same dark force as 100 years ago.

Although late overdue and only in a time of very tense relationships between the USA and Turkey, the recognition of the 1915 genocide by the US House of Representatives is a further and important step towards formal worldwide acceptance of past atrocities. We believe that the US recognition sends a clear message to Turkey to come to terms with its past and present. Nothing Turkey can do will change the fact that, outside of Turkey, everyone recognizes the 1915 Genocide. Turkey can only stall but in the end a mature Turkish democracy will have to recognise its past.

The European Syriac Union (ESU) calls on all countries in the world to also formally recognize in law the 1915 Genocide. Don't be a party to denial. After more than 100 years of Ottoman-Turkish denial and severe trauma for our Syriac people, we want closure and peace of mind. We call on the perpetrators to reconcile with their past. Only by reconciliation can we have a future together! We forgive but can't forget. We will never forget but we are open for forgiveness and reconciliation talks if the other side reaches out. A first reaching out by Turkey is to stop the current aggression and invasion in the Democratic Autonomous Administration of North & East Syria and stop the killing and displacement of the people that had to endure genocide and its trauma for more than 100 years now.

European Syriac Union Co-chairs

Ayfer Gabriel and Tony Vergili

