

U.S. Filing With The International Court Of Justice Acknowledges Armenian Genocide

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- On the heels of President George W. Bush's announcement of Marie L. Yovanovitch and James F. Jeffrey to serve as Ambassadors Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republics of Armenia and Turkey, respectively, the Armenian Assembly of America has called attention to a U.S. filing with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning the United Nations Genocide Convention squarely acknowledging the Armenian Genocide as a crime.

The document reads in part: "The Genocide Convention resulted from the inhuman and barbarous practices which prevailed in certain countries prior to and during World War II, when entire religious, racial and national minority groups were threatened with and subjected to deliberate extermination. The practice of genocide has occurred throughout human history. The Roman persecution of the Christians, the Turkish massacres of Armenians, the extermination of millions of Jews and Poles by the Nazis are outstanding examples of the crime of genocide."

Moreover, this 1951 document recently discussed by leading genocide legal authority Professor William A. Schabas of The Irish Centre of Human Rights also reads: "This was the background when the General Assembly of the United Nations considered the problem of genocide. Not once, but twice, that body declared unanimously that the practice of genocide is criminal under international law and that States ought to take steps to prevent and punish genocide."

The United Nations General Assembly Resolution of 1946, 96 (I), defined the crime of genocide as: "Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results

in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these human groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations."

Many instances of such crimes of genocide have occurred when racial, religious, political, and other groups have been destroyed, entirely or in part.

Additionally, in 1948 the United Nations War Crimes Commission invoked the 28 May 1915 Allied declaration denouncing crimes against humanity and civilization in connection to the Armenian massacres. "The warning given to the Turkish Government on this occasion by the Governments of the Triple Entente dealt precisely with one of the types of acts which the modern term 'crimes against humanity' is intended to cover, namely, inhuman acts committed by a government against its own subjects."

The 1951 statement is consistent with the legislative history of the U.S. ratification of the Genocide Convention, President Reagan's 1981 Proclamation 4838 ("Like the genocide of the Armenians before it, and the genocide of the Cambodians which followed it - and like too many other such persecutions of too many other peoples - the lessons of the Holocaust must never be forgotten."), the 2003 International Center for Transitional Justice endorsed by President Bush, which concluded that "the Events [of 1915], viewed collectively, can thus be said to include all of the elements of the crime of genocide as defined in the Convention, and legal scholars as well as historians, politicians, journalists and other people would be justified in continuing to so describe them," the 1993 court decision in *Krikorian v. Department of State* (where the D.C. Federal Court of Appeals confirmed that U.S. policy recognizes the Armenian Genocide) and the 42 U.S. States that have affirmed the Armenian Genocide.

Rep. Royce Raises Concerns At Committee Hearing Over Azerbaijani Military And Turkish Blockade

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Today, Rep. Ed Royce (R-CA) voiced his concerns about the current political situation in the Caucasus during the House Foreign Affairs Committee hearing, "The Caucasus: Frozen Conflicts and Closed Borders."

"The political situation in the Caucasus is cause for great concern. The buildup of the Azerbaijani military and fiery rhetoric from its leaders has raised the possibility of armed conflict. The continued Turkish blockade of Armenia has also served to destabilize the region," said Royce.

Azerbaijan's bellicose rhetoric has peaked the attention of many in Congress. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has said their military budget "will continue to grow" while its Defense Minister has said that the chance of war with Armenia "is close to 100 percent."

Armenia is faced with limited

options due to Turkey's sealed border. Ninety percent of Armenia's trade crosses Georgian territory, incurring a transport cost of \$2,000 or the equivalent of freight transport from New York to Seattle. "The Turkish blockade of Armenia is costing the Armenian economy dearly," said Royce.

Also raised at the Foreign Affairs Committee Hearing was the subject of the Armenian Genocide. Former U.S. Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, witnessed the atrocities carried out against the Armenian people, and recorded them quite vividly. Morgenthau said, "The whole history of the human race contains no such horrible episode as this," referring to the Armenian Genocide.

"These are the words of our Ambassador," said Royce. "If this doesn't constitute genocide, what does, and what will it take to recognize this atrocity as such?"

Expert On Armenian Genocide Joins Clark University Faculty Taner Akcam Was Political Prisoner In Turkey

WORCESTER -- Clark University has appointed prominent historian Taner Akcam to occupy the Robert Aram and Marianne Kaloosdian and Stephen and Marion Mugar Professorship in Armenian Genocide Studies. Professor Akcam is widely admired for his bold and authoritative scholarship, using Turkish sources, on the genocide of the Armenians by the Turks in the early 20th century.

Professor Akcam joins Clark's Strassler Family Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, effective July 1. Formerly a visiting professor of history at the University of Minnesota and a visiting scholar at the Armenian Research Center, University of Michigan-Dearborn, Professor Akcam serves on the editorial board of *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, the official journal of the International Association of Genocide Scholars.

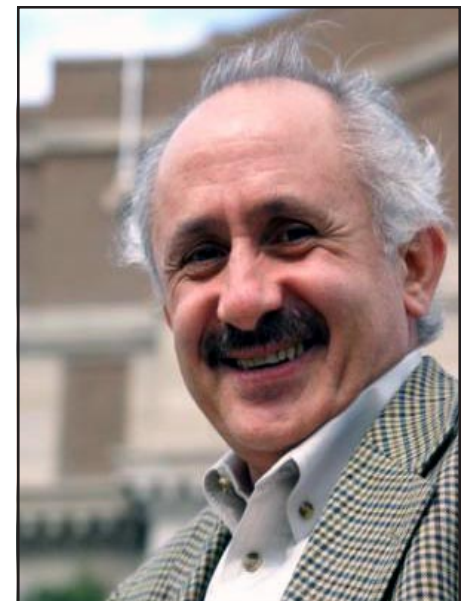
At Clark, Professor Akcam will teach the History of the Armenian Genocide and the History of the Modern Middle East.

Professor Akcam is as renowned for his scholarship as he is for his courageous political actions championing freedom of the press, the right to pursue scholarly investigation, and the protection of civil liberties," said Debórah Dwork, Rose Professor of Holocaust History and Director of the Strassler Center. "We are delighted and very proud that he has joined our faculty."

Professor Akcam grew up in Turkey, where he was imprisoned for his participation in free press publications. Amnesty International publicized his plight as a prisoner of conscience in 1976. After a dramatic escape, Akcam received political asylum in Germany, where he earned a Ph.D. from the University of Hannover and worked with the Hamburg Institute for Social Research on the historical use of violence and torture in Turkey.

Professor Akcam has authored several scholarly works, as well as numerous articles in Turkish, German, and English. His most recent book, "A Shameful Act: The Armenian Genocide and the Question of Turkish Responsibility" (Metropolitan Books, 2006), won stellar reviews.

Akcam's life and work have been featured in four critically acclaimed documentary films. "A Wall of Silence" (Humanist Broadcast



Professor Taner Akcam

Foundation, the Netherlands, 1997) premiered on Dutch national television and was shown in theaters across the United States and Canada. "Armenian Genocide: 90 Years Later" (Twin Cities Public Television/University of Minnesota, 2005) garnered a regional Emmy nomination and the Eric Sevareid Award for broadcast journalism. "Armenian Genocide" (Two Cats Productions, 2006) aired nationally on most PBS television stations. "Screamers" (Carla Garapedian, 2006), starring the Grammy-winning band System of a Down, was screened at the Cannes Film Festival, the U.S. Congress, and the European and British Parliaments.

In 2007, the Armenian Bar Association presented the Hrant Dink Freedom Award to Professor Akcam as "a champion of historical truth about the Armenian Genocide and for his courageous defense of liberty and free speech." He has also been honored by the Harvard University Foundation for Intercultural and Race Relations as well as the Massachusetts State Legislature.

"My appointment is a sign of change, with symbolic meaning," Akcam told *The Boston Globe* (5/29/08). "It is not important, the ethnic origin of the individual in this position; what is important is the approach of the individual to the historic wrongdoing."

In an editorial (6/1/08), the *Worcester Telegram & Gazette* stated: "Clark's choice of a Turkish-born professor, Taner Akcam, as chairman of Armenian genocide studies is a welcome demonstration of a firm commitment to free inquiry, academic fairness and historical truth."

Belgian Goes On Hunger Strike In Armenian Capital

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on "the state of democracy in Armenia."

Vandevale also said he was not engaging in politics, but added: "I am a pacifist and I think that in a true democracy people cannot be kept in jail for merely expressing their political views. This is an essential human right. All people are equal regardless of their opinion."

The Belgian's Armenian wife says she is not affiliated with any political party in Armenia, nor is a member of any organization. She says simply seeing the current situation in Armenia, her husband decided to resort to a hunger strike.

"He wants to see Armenia as a democratic country. He says if there are political prisoners in Armenia, it means there is no democracy," she said to RFE/RL.