

Draft Resolution on Armenian Genocide

Sponsors: Boston; Jewish Labor Committee; Palm Beach; Rhode Island

Summary: This resolution demonstrates solidarity with Armenia and Armenian Americans. It recognizes the 100th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, which started in 1915 and continued past the end of WWI. It also calls upon the United States to recognize what happened as a genocide. The JCPA has no prior policy on this subject.

1 Historians and scholars tell us that the Armenian people were the victims of the first genocide of
2 the twentieth century at the hands of the Ottoman Turks, now represented by the country of
3 Turkey. Up to 1.5 million Armenians were killed or expelled from their homes and deported. The
4 year 2015 is the 100th anniversary of the start of the Armenian Genocide. The government of
5 Turkey has, to this day, refused to acknowledge such genocide took place.

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7 There are a dwindling number of survivors to give us first-person accounts of the horrors of the
8 Holocaust. The Armenian Genocide is a distant memory in the minds of the children of
9 survivors.

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11 The Jewish communities, as the victims of one of the worst genocides of the twentieth century,
12 have a bond with the Armenian people here in the United States and abroad. We have a moral
13 obligation to work toward recognition of the war crimes perpetrated against the Armenian
14 people.

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16 The word genocide was not even coined until near the end of World War II and the word
17 Holocaust did not come into common usage to describe what happened to the Jews until after
18 WWII.

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20 The United States has yet to name what happened to the Armenian people for a variety of
21 reasons. The most obvious is the fear that doing so will hurt our relationship with Turkey.
22 Turkey spans the east and west. The United States needs Turkey's permission to fly over its
23 territory and for support services in the United States' activities in Iraq, its attempts to keep Iran
24 in check, and to fight ISIS.

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26 After 100 years, it is time for the U.S. to face facts and acknowledges that what happened in
27 1915 and in subsequent years was genocide.

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29 Since at least 1951 there have been numerous references by U.S. government officials, Congress,
30 and previous presidents to what happened to the Armenians as genocide. These have often been
31 during events held in commemoration of the anniversary of the start of the genocide. But efforts
32 to pass a House resolution officially recognizing it have failed, often as a result of lobbying on
33 behalf of Turkey.

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35 President Barack Obama, as a senator, pledged to support congressional resolutions to recognize
36 the Armenian Genocide. As a presidential candidate, he once again promised to recognize the
37 Armenian Genocide. Yet once he became president, political realities prevented such a move.

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39 At this time, some 23 foreign countries, a number of world organizations, and 44 U.S. states
40 have recognized the genocide that took place against the Armenian people. The Union for
41 Reform Judaism, Anti-Defamation League, and American Jewish Committee have previously
42 taken positions on this issue, as well as have some U.S. church groups.

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44 The Jewish Council for Public Affairs believes that:

- 45 • What happened to the Armenian people in 1915 and subsequently was, in fact, the first
46 genocide of the twentieth century.
- 47 • The Jewish people have asked the world to bear witness to the Holocaust. As we say Never
48 Again, we must likewise bear witness other people's genocide and say Never Again. What
49 happened in Cambodia, Rwanda, and Darfur in the latter part of the twentieth century also
50 happened to the Armenian people in the beginning of the twentieth century.
- 51 • We must not let the politics of the moment, or our relationship with Turkey, sway our moral
52 obligation to recognize the suffering of the Armenian people.

- 53 • We call upon our Congress and the president to officially recognize what started in 1915 at
54 the hands of the Ottoman Turks, and resulted in the killing and deportation of upwards of 1.5
55 Armenians, as the Armenian Genocide.

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57 The community relations field should:

- 58 • Consult and work with the national Armenian organizations to further the goal of U.S.
59 recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
- 60 • Consult and work with the major Jewish organizations to raise awareness of the issue and
61 gain their support in working to gain U.S. recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
- 62 • Consult and work with our interfaith coalition partners to further the aim of U.S. recognition
63 of the Armenian Genocide.
- 64 • Urge our congressional representatives to support resolutions in Congress that call for the
65 United States to recognize the Armenian Genocide.
- 66 • Call upon the President to recognize the Armenian Genocide.