



Joint Statement

[translation]

His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians, Holy See of Etchmiadzin

His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of Cilicia, Holy See of Cilicia

We Demand Turkey Return Confiscated Armenian Churches and Church Properties

In 2015, Armenians living in the Republics of Armenia and Karabagh and in the Diaspora will commemorate the 100th anniversary of the 1915 Genocide of the Armenian people, planned and executed by Ottoman Turkey.

In 1915, more than one-and-a-half million Armenians were victims of the Genocide. The survivors of the deportation and exile found refuge in Eastern Armenia (the current Republic of Armenia), Syria, Lebanon, other Arab countries, and various countries around the world.

Armenians living under the Ottoman Empire in Western Armenia, Cilicia and other regions of Turkey, lost all their personal belongings as well as their churches, monasteries, holy sites, religious, educational, and charitable centers, cultural and religious relics and artifacts of great value, including cross-stones, manuscripts, and holy pictures. All of the properties belonging to those massacred and those forcibly deported were usurped by the Turkish government under the pretext of being “abandoned properties.”

Ninety-eight years after the Armenian Genocide, the current Turkish Republic, the

legal successors of the Ottoman Empire, not only refuses to acknowledge the well-planned and executed genocide, but continues its anti-Armenian policy, keeping in bondage the Armenian people's confiscated properties and artifacts, as well as religious and cultural treasures.

Therefore, we send this appeal to the Turkish government with the following demands:

1. Recognition of the Armenian Genocide.
2. Total reparations for Armenian losses in human lives and human rights.
3. The immediate return of churches, monasteries, church properties, and all religious and cultural sites to their rightful and legal owners, the Armenian people.

As we pray for the memory of our victims of the Genocide, we condemn all violent acts against God-given human lives, all assaults on human dignity, and all acts that disrupt peaceful co-existence, because "God is a God not of disorder but of peace," (I Corinthians 14:33), who invites people to love, to live together, and cooperate in peace and harmony.

We remember with gratitude all those people and governments who during the Genocide sheltered the deported Armenians and showed care and brotherly love toward them.

The Armenian people will always remain grateful to all those governments, who driven by their principles of compassion and justice, have condemned and officially recognized the Armenian Genocide.

On the threshold of the 100th Anniversary commemoration of the Armenian Genocide, we shall work together to achieve the demands of the Armenian people in the name of justice and in defense of the rights of the Armenian people.

April 24, 2013



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Etchmidadzin, Armenia



Aram I
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