

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION No. _____ C. M. S.

FILED
OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK
OAKLAND
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INTRODUCED BY COUNCILMEMBER NADEL

A Resolution declaring April 24th as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

WHEREAS, the Armenian people, living in their 3,000 year historic homeland in eastern Asia Minor and throughout the Ottoman Empire, were subjected to severe persecution and brutal injustice by the rulers of the Ottoman Empire before and after the turn of the twentieth century, including widespread massacres, usurpation of land and property, and acts of wanton destruction during the period from 1894 to 1896, and again in 1909; and

WHEREAS, the horrible experience of the Armenians culminated in 1915 in what is known by historians as the “First Genocide of the Twentieth Century;” and

WHEREAS, the Armenian Genocide began with the arrest, exile, and murder of hundreds of Armenian intellectuals, and political, religious, and business leaders, starting on April 24, 1915; and

WHEREAS, the regime then in control of the empire planned and executed the unspeakable atrocities committed against the Armenian people from 1915 through 1923, which included the torture, starvation, and murder of 1,500,000 Armenians, death marches into the Syrian desert, the forced exile of more than 500,000 innocent people, and the loss of the traditional Armenian homelands; and

WHEREAS, some Turks and others jeopardized their safety in order to protect Armenians from the crimes being perpetrated by the regime, but the genocide of the Armenian people constituted one of the most egregious violations of human rights in the history of the world; and

WHEREAS, the United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Henry Morgenthau, Sr., stated “When the Turkish authorities gave the order for these deportations, they were merely giving the death warrant to a whole race... The killing of the Armenian people was accompanied by the systematic destruction of churches, schools, libraries, treasures of art, and cultural monuments in an attempt to eliminate all traces of a noble civilization with a history of more than 3,000 years;” and

WHEREAS, Winston Churchill wrote: “As for Turkish atrocities: ... massacring uncounted thousands of helpless Armenians, men, women, and children together, whole districts blotted out in one administrative holocaust—these were beyond human redress”; and

WHEREAS, Adolph Hitler, in persuading his army commanders on the eve of World War II that the merciless persecution and killing of Poles, Jews, and other peoples would bring no retribution, declared, “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians;” and

WHEREAS, unlike other peoples and governments that have admitted and denounced the abuses and crimes of predecessor regimes, and despite the overwhelming weight of evidence, the Republic of Turkey has inexplicably and adamantly denied the occurrence of the crimes against humanity, and those denials compound the grief of the few remaining survivors of the atrocities, desecrate the memory of the victims, and cause continuing trauma and pain to the descendants of the victims; and

WHEREAS, the passage of time and the fact that few survivors remain who serve as reminders of indescribable brutality and torment, compel a sense of urgency in efforts to solidify recognition and reaffirmation of historical truth; and

WHEREAS, by honoring the survivors and consistently remembering and condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenian people as well as the persecution of the Assyrian and Greek populations of the Ottoman Empire, we guard against repetition of the crime of genocide; and

WHEREAS, California has become home to the largest population of Armenians in the United States, and those citizens have enriched our state through leadership in the fields of academia, medicine, business, agriculture, government, and the arts and are proud and patriotic practitioners of American citizenship; and

WHEREAS, Oakland is proud to join the Armenian-American community in its commemoration of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide in an effort to educate others about the tragic loss of life, land, and human rights of the Armenian people and the crimes of genocide committed against them; now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Oakland City Council does hereby declare April 24th as Armenian Genocide Commemoration Day in the City of Oakland and will forward this resolution to the President of the United States, urging recognition of this Genocide; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the City of Oakland joins with other Bay Area municipalities in commemorating this solemn occasion of the 90th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide with a Community-Wide Commemoration March from Civic Center to St. Mary's Cathedral in San Francisco where Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown will be the keynote speaker.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA, _____, 2004

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES- BROOKS, BRUNNER, CHANG, NADEL, QUAN, REID, AND
PRESIDENT DE LA FUENTE

NOES-

ABSENT-

ABSTENTION-

ATTEST:

LATONDA SIMMONS
Interim City Clerk and Clerk of the Council
of the City of Oakland, California