

Armenian Genocide



THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: 1915-1923


Massacre sites. The marker size represents the number of deaths.


Current Armenia borders.


Death March Routes. Turkish troops forced Armenians into the desert, without food or water, to die of starvation and heath exhaustion.

Genocide

Genocide is a very specific term, referring to **violent crimes** committed against a large group of people, especially those of a particular ethnic group or nation, with the intent to destroy the existence of the group.

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ARMENIA OVERVIEW



Where is Armenia ?

Armenia is located in West Asia.

Armenia shares land borders with 4 countries: Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, Georgia



HOW IT STARTED

The Roots of Genocide

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

- The Armenian people have made their home in the Caucasus region of Eurasia for some 3000 years.
- At the beginning of 4th century AD, it became the first nation in the world to make Christianity its official religion, but for most part, the control of the region shifted from one empire to another.
- During the 15th century, Armenia was absorbed into the mighty Ottoman Empire.



- The Ottoman rulers, like most of their subjects, were Muslim.
- They permitted religious minorities like the Armenians to maintain some autonomy, but they also subjected them to unequal and unjust treatment.
- Christians had to pay higher taxes than Muslim, and they had very few political and legal rights.





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- In spite of the obstacles, the Armenian community thrived under Ottoman rule.
- Their Turkish neighbors tended to resent their success.
- This resentment was compounded by suspicions that the Christian Armenians would be more loyal to Christian governments (that of the Russians, for example, who shared an unstable border with Turkey) than they were to the Ottoman caliphate



- These suspicions grew more acute as the Ottoman Empire crumbled.
- At the end of the 19th century, the despotic Turkish Sultan Abdul Hamid II—obsessed with loyalty above all, and infuriated by the nascent Armenian campaign to win basic civil rights—declared that he would solve the “Armenian question” once and for all.
- “I will soon settle those Armenians,” he told a reporter in 1890. “I will give them a *box on the ear* which will make them...relinquish their revolutionary ambitions.”



The First Armenian Massacre



1894 - 1896

- “Box in the ear” took the form of a state-sanctioned pogrom (the organized killing of many helpless people usually because of their race or religion)
- Turkish military officials, soldiers, and ordinary men sacked Armenian villages and cities and massacred their citizens
- Hundreds of thousands of Armenians were murdered



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The Rise of the Young Turks



1908


- “Young Turks”, a group of reformers overthrew Sultan Abdul Hamid and established a more modern constitutional government
- At first, the Armenians were hopeful that they would have an equal place in this new state, but they soon learned that the nationalist Young Turks wanted most of all was to “Turkify” the empire
- Non-Turks, especially Christian non-Turks were considered a grave threat to the new state



WORLD WAR I

1914

- The Turks entered World War 1 on the side of Germany and the Austro-Hungarian Empire
- At the same time, Ottoman religious authorities declared jihad (holy war) against all Christians except their allies
- Military leaders began to argue that the Armenians were traitors: If they thought they could win independence if the Allies were victorious, this argument went, the Armenians would be eager to fight for the enemy.

- As the war intensified, Armenians organized volunteer battalions to help the Russian army fight against the Turks in the Caucasus region.
 - These events, and general Turkish suspicion of the Armenian people, led the Turkish government to push for the “removal” of the Armenians from the war zones along the Eastern Front.
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Genocide Begins



April 24, 1915

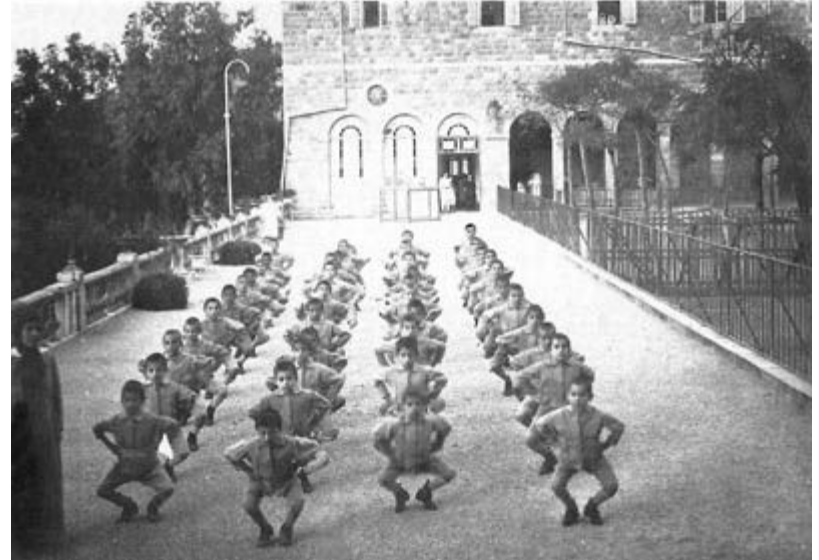
- The Armenian genocide began
- Turkish government arrested and executed several hundred Armenian intellectuals.
- After that, ordinary Armenians were turned out of their homes and sent on death marches through the Mesopotamian desert without food or water.
- Frequently, the marchers were stripped naked and forced to walk under the scorching sun until they dropped dead. People who stopped to rest were shot.



At the same time, the Young Turks created a “Special Organization,” which in turn organized “killing squads” or “butcher battalions” to carry out, as one officer put it, “the liquidation of the Christian elements.” These killing squads were often made up of murderers and other ex-convicts. They drowned people in rivers, threw them off cliffs, crucified them and burned them alive. In short order, the Turkish countryside was littered with Armenian corpses.



Records show that during this “Turkification” campaign government squads also kidnapped children, converted them to Islam and gave them to Turkish families. In some places, they raped women and forced them to join Turkish “harems” or serve as slaves. Muslim families moved into the homes of deported Armenians and seized their property.



In 1922, when the genocide was over, there were just 388,000 Armenians remaining in the Ottoman Empire.



Perpetrators

- When: 1915 - 1922
- Who: The Young Turkish Government
(Nationalism)



Ismail Enver Pasha
(1881-1922)
Member of the Young
Turk Triumverate
Genocide Organizer



Mehmed Talaat Pasha
(1847-1921)
Leader of the Party of
"Ittihat ve Terakki"
Genocide Organizer



Jemal Pasha
(1872-1922)
Member of the Young
Turk Triumverate
Genocide Organizer



Doctor Nazim
(1872-1926)
Executive Committee
of Three

Victims

- **Dead:** 800,000 to 1.5 million (approx. half of the Armenian population in the Ottoman Empire)
 - **Causes:** Execution, death marches, torture, famine, epidemic diseases
- **Targets:** Armenians living in the Ottoman Empire
- **Refugees:** ~500,000



Armenian refugees



*Armenian woman kneeling beside dead child in field
“within sight of help and safety at Aleppo”*

The Armenian Genocide Today



After the Ottomans surrendered in 1918, the leaders of the Young Turks fled to Germany, which promised not to prosecute them for the genocide.

However, a group of Armenian nationalists devised a plan, known as Operation Nemesis, to track down and assassinate the leaders of the genocide.

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In **March 2010**, a U.S. Congressional panel at last voted to recognize the genocide.



VIDEO HERE

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