

NİKOL PASHİNYAN'S SPEECH IN THE WORLD WAR I ARMISTICE EVENT REVEALS HIS INTENTIONS REGARDING 1915 EVENTS

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Armenian-American bilingual daily newspaper Asbarez and The Armenian Mirror-Spectator (a weekly printed in the United States) published the full text of the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyans speech at the Paris Peace Panel that took place last November following the event marking the centennial of the World War I Armistice. [1]

Pashinyan in his speech mainly deals with the 1915 events and repeats the distorted Armenian arguments that designate the said events as genocide. He also indirectly refers to Armenia-Azerbaijan Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In this context, after stating that the right of the peoples to self-determination was set out in Wilsons 14 points, he brings to the fore the decades-long struggle of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh to determine their destiny.

Per the said reports, after his speech Pashinyan presented an illustrated book by historian Hayk Demoyan entitled The Armenian Genocide: Front Page Coverage in the World Media to be included in the Peace Library as Armenias contribution.

Nikol Pashinyan has made the following statement not warranted by facts or evidence It was during World War One that the Allied powers, for the first time ever, used the definition crimes against humanity and civilization, thus condemning the Ottoman rulers for the extermination of 1,5 million Armenians. Later, this horrendous crime was to be termed the first genocide of the 20th century.

First part of the above-mentioned sentence regarding the crimes against humanity and civilization seems to be inspired by the web page of the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and Responsibility to Protect concerning the term crimes against humanity which reads as follows:

> The term appears to have been applied for the first time formally at the international level in 1915 by the Allied governments (France, Great Britain and

Russia) when issuing a declaration condemning the mass killing of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.[2]

As to the content of the Pashinyans above quoted sentence, three points should be mentioned. Firstly, he is twisting the term crimes against humanity and instead is using the terminology of crimes against humanity and civilization.

Secondly, he, without indicating any source, claims that the definition for his version (crimes against humanity and civilization) was first used by the Allied Powers during the World War One. Most probably he uses this term based on the information contained in the International Crimes Database (ICD) website, hosted and maintained by the T.M.C. Asser Instituut in The Hague.[3] The said web site states that the phrase crimes against humanity was first employed internationally in a 1915 declaration by the governments of Great Britain, France and Russia It produces also the copy of the so-called 1915 declaration. However, the document, produced by the web site is a copy of a telegram by the US Department of State to the US Embassy in Ottoman Empire and cannot be considered as a declaration by Allied Powers. In addition, the authenticity of the document is in question in view of the fake documents circulated concerning the 1915 events. Hence, in view of the foregoing there is a need to challenge the reference included in The Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect web page quoted above.

Thirdly, Pashinyan fails to refer to the extermination campaign conducted by the Imperial Germany between the years 1904-1908 against Herero and Nama people in lands belonging to todays Namibia. As is known, an extermination order was issued against the Herero and Nama tribes that had rebelled against the German colonial administration and these tribes were subjected to a systematic extermination campaign. The people of Namibia today characterize these events as genocide.[4] However, this omission is justifiable since, the term genocide has come into being in 1948 with the UN and genocide can be attributed only the competent courts outlined by the 1948 Genocide Convention.

Another striking point in Pashinyan s speech is that he fails to mention Srebrenitsa genocide committed in Bosnia-Herzegovina against Bosniaks. He mentions in this respect the genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, the genocides of the Christians and Yezidis in the Middle East, the violence against the Rohingya people. Nikol Pashinyan should remember that The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague has ruled that the mass killings in Srebrenica in 1995 constitute a genocide.

The speech delivered by Nikol Pashinyan in the Paris Peace Panel is an unfortunate reminder that despite his prouncements for change and a righteous path he maintains the aging Armenian misleading arguments and baseless claims regarding the 1915 events.

**Photo: Asbarez*

[1] In Solemn Paris Ceremony, Macron Leads Armistice Commemorations, *Mirror Spectator*

, December 17, 2018; Pashinyan Hightlights Armenian Genocide, Wilsons 14 Points in Address at Armistice Event, *Asbarez*, November 12, 2018, http://asbarez.com/176150/pashinyan-hightlights-armenian-genocide-wilsons-14-points-in-address-at-armistice-event/.

[2] Crimes Against Humanity, United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention And The Responsibility To Protect, accessed December 17, 2018, http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/crimes-against-humanity.html.

[3] International Crimes Database, Crimes against humanity, n.d., accessed December 17, 2018.

[4] Mehmet Oğuzhan Tulun, Germanys Test With Genocide, *Center for Eurasian Studies (AVİM)*, December 17, 2017, https://avim.org.tr/Blog/GERMANY-S-TEST-WITH-GENOCIDE-HURRIYET-DAILY-NEWS-17-11-2017.

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