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12 February 2015

Hon Julie Bishop, Minister of Foreign Affairs
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AUSTRALIA (Julie.Bishop.MP@aph.gov.au; cc: Members of Parliament)

Dear Hon Minister

Christian Genocides

As you know, as an Australian citizen I wrote to your office regarding the Armenian Genocide on 04 October 2014 and on 28 December 2014. Unfortunately, I have not received the courtesy of a proper response to either letter, but have waited another six weeks because I understand the New Year break and a leadership issue may have distracted everyone. However I think you will agree that matters related to the sanctity of human life are more important than anything else, and thus I am requesting an urgent answer by post and electronic mail please.

You might also know that I subsequently wrote an open letter to parliamentarians on 17 January 2015. In that letter I requested everyone to:

...consider your conscience, and to refrain from supporting the memorial of ANZAC Day on 24 April 2015 (please note the copy of the letter from the President of Armenia to the President of Turkey on this subject that follows). I am asking you to recognise the Armenian Genocide on 24 April 2015. To support an ANZAC memorial on 24 April 2015 would be an egregious act that effectively means you are complicit in the crime against humanity, by joining Turkey in its vehement, century-long denial of the Genocide.

Hon Foreign Minister, please be assured that I have no other aim but the most optimal outcome for us as a civilised and honest people. I am proud of Australia's current international human rights standing, but not our stance on the Christian Genocides of Armenian, Assyrian and Greek people. On balance, when I consider this matter involves the most cruel human suffering of vulnerable elderly, men, women and children, I find it hard to imagine any human of conscience would consider hiding the truth, no matter what Turkey threatens. In fact none of this is any good for the people of Turkey either, as they continue to be oppressed under Article 301 of their law if anyone even discusses the Genocides, or worse still, are assassinated as in the case of Hrant Dink¹.

There is no doubt that the events from 1915 [related to the extermination of more than a million Armenians and more than two million Christians overall] were genocidal in nature. I am sure your office has already read the detailed analysis in Geoffrey Robertson Q. C.'s *An Inconvenient Genocide*, but I should emphasise the following points that are often deliberately overlooked by Turkey's legions of government-backed denialists and embassy-sponsored pressure groups:

- The government of the Ottoman Empire was responsible for protecting its citizens under international law, but instead, millions of innocent civilians perished in the most brutal ways imaginable – an act unpardonable with the excuse of war (especially not in a conflict zone), as there is zero excuse to kill any civilians *en masse*;
- Only weeks after the Armenian Genocide started with the murder of more than 200 Armenian intellectuals on 24 April 1915 in Constantinople, the Ottoman government enacted a law² that allowed the Turkish leadership to profit from the seizure of so-called 'abandoned' property – there cannot be any more obvious evidence of the intent to exterminate people if property is stolen from people – that they knew would not be returning;

¹ 17 January 2007, Istanbul

² June 1915, which remained in effect for 71 years until it was finally abolished on 11 June 1986

- The false premise of deportation due to war (either because the Turkish leadership were ‘concerned about an Armenian uprising’ or because they needed to be ‘taken to a so-called safe place’) are arguments only a non-intellectual would make – or someone wanting to hide the truth. The following facts illuminate the real reasons:
 - The decision to exterminate Armenians was part of a racial hatred created at the highest levels of the Ottoman government that stemmed back decades, to events such as the Hamidian Massacres of 1894-1896, and as evidenced in a government-backed proclamation of *Jihad* on 05 November 1914 against Christians (Germans exempted of course);
 - The Ottoman Empire did not need to enter WWI, but decided to ally with Germany with a cowardly, unheralded attack on Russia on 29 October 1914;
 - Most deported civilians were not living in conflict zones;
 - Unbiased (because they were Ottoman allies) German military personnel, diplomatic staff and missionaries, and neutral US representatives all witnessed the genocidal nature of Turkish forces and reported on the death marches and death camps (the German parliament has apologised to Armenians³ for their part and for being complicit with the Genocide);
 - Greeks and Assyrians were also persecuted in addition to Armenians, and there was no evidence of a widespread ‘uprising’ by Armenians – even in the rare cases where there was resistance such as in Van and at Musa Dagh, that resistance was defensive in nature against the brutal Turkish soldiers, gendarmes, criminal gangs armed by the State called *chetti*, and Kurds – so most civilians simply walked to their deaths in the Syrian Desert (Sahag, Armenian Catholicos of Cilicia, even instructed Armenians not to resist);
- Thousands of churches were desecrated and destroyed, and any valuable property stolen from these holy places, so no right-minded person can be in any doubt that this was done to eradicate Christians and their icons from the Ottoman Empire; and
- An almost complete obliteration of Armenian place names and historical places has occurred since WWI, demonstrating the most pernicious contempt for a people that had occupied their lands for thousands of years before the Seljuk Turks invaded Anatolia in the 11th century, in an attempt to eradicate a proud and ancient nation from history (which could have happened if the Turk invasion of Eastern Armenia in 1918 had not been successfully repulsed by the last remaining desperate Armenians).

The Armenian Genocide would be analogous to Australian Europeans ‘deporting’ all Aboriginals – also an indigenous people – to another land, and along the way conducting egregious acts such as beheading, burning, crucifying, bayoneting, and shooting of defenseless men, women and children in the same manner that ISIS does today. Foreign Minister, as a civilised world we are horrified by what ISIS does and we respond accordingly, but should we treat the events of a century ago in much the same lands any differently by minimising the horror through a failure to recognise and act on the wrong-doing now?

As you know, genocide is a State-sponsored act because only the State has the resources to conduct a wide-spread slaughter of any of its minority groups. The *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (CPPCG) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948, to ensure that the Holocaust that was perpetrated during the decade before the CPPCG was recognised as such, and was thus preventable in future.

I expect, Foreign Minister, that you will have many public servants busy trying to find some plausible excuse as to why Australia, as a civilised nation with a proud human rights record (except, of course, for its own historical treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islands people), should continue to support a nation that denies an act of genocide. Turkey continues to maintain that it was ‘a necessity of war’, or that ‘it was in reaction to uprisings’, or that ‘it was the West and Russia that was responsible because of their colonialist aggression’ (when it was the Turks that made war in 1914), and even arguing about the numbers slaughtered, as if that is relevant, which it is not.

³ 2005 Bundestag Resolution

I have even heard spurious arguments stating that the regrettable Turkish expulsion from the Balkans after the 1912-1913 war meant the deportation of Armenians was somehow justified. This is nonsense because the Turkish deportations did not involve systematic death marches and death camps, and they represented a people that came by invasion, trying to assimilate Europe into the Ottoman Empire and spread Islam at the point of a sword, so it was not analogous at all).

Hon Foreign Minister, this has nothing to do with strategic alliances, no matter how one tries to justify it. It is a simple matter of being a human being and recognising a crime against humanity, just as Great Britain, France, and Russia did a century ago in their Joint Declaration of 29 May 1915:

For about a month the Kurd and Turkish populations of Armenia [Western Armenia within the Ottoman Empire] has been massacring Armenians with the connivance and often assistance of Ottoman authorities. Such massacres took place in middle April (new style) at Erzerum, Dertchun, Eguine, Akn, Bitlis, Mush, Sassun, Zeitun, and throughout Cilicia. Inhabitants of about one hundred villages near Van were all murdered. In that city Armenian quarter is besieged by Kurds. At the same time in Constantinople Ottoman Government ill-treats inoffensive Armenian population. In view of those new crimes of Turkey against humanity and civilization, the Allied governments announce publicly to the Sublime-Porte that they will hold personally responsible [for] these crimes all members of the Ottoman government and those of their agents who are implicated in such massacres.

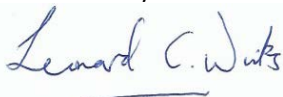
The Australian public deserves to know with absolute clarity what position your office is representing as our nation's opinion on this subject, especially as the first question from my letter of 04 October 2014 has not been answered. I have waited patiently for more than four months so now I am posing four very simple and precise questions, which should not take much time to respond (by **15 March 2015** please), nor should they be hard to answer in an unambiguous manner, so that everyone in the community can understand:

1. What is the Prime Minister Hon. Tony Abbott MP's current position on recognising the Armenian Greek and Assyrian Genocides, given that as Leader of the Opposition in his letter of 19 April 2013 he stated his sympathy to the Armenian people and his recognition of the 98th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide (or was that position insincere at the time)?
2. Given that the Australian Prime Minister has expressed his honest and heartfelt feelings in 2013 recognising the Armenian Genocide, how can the Foreign Minister within his government state that the systematic slaughter of millions of civilians of one religious group by their own government was not genocide?
3. As a party involved during the events of WWI in Ottoman Turkey, what is Australia doing to persuade Turkey, as the successor State to the Ottoman Empire, to recognise its past, to allow its people to finally speak of the truth, to return stolen property to Armenians and other Christians similarly dispossessed, and to make reparations for the slaughter of so many of its own citizens?

Note: the 2009 Protocol of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the Republic of Turkey and the Republic of Armenia was never ratified, and it does not specifically deal with the Armenian Genocide; thus Australia cannot refer or rely on this, especially after Turkey indicated its attitude to the conciliatory and peaceful invitation from the Armenian President to Turkey, by inviting him to Gallipoli for a faux ANZAC memorial, on the very day Armenia mourns its dead.

4. Will Australia recognize the Armenian Genocide by 24 April 2015?
5. Will Australian government representatives attend the Gallipoli event on 24 April 2015 in response to the Turkish President's invitation, and if so, who is attending?

Yours sincerely



Len Wicks, Author of *Origins: Discovery* (<http://originsdiscovery.com>)