



Joint Committee for the Commemoration of the
95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide

Comité uni pour la commémoration du
95ième anniversaire du Génocide des Arméniens

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Canadian-Armenian Community Commemorated the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, In Front of the Parliament Hill and the Armenian Genocide Monument of Montreal

Ottawa – The Canadian-Armenian community and Armenians around the world commemorated the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, a crime against humanity that has been recognized by numerous countries including Canada but constantly denied by the successive governments of Turkey. On this occasion, Armenians around the world mourned the 1.5 million Armenians exterminated during the Genocide, celebrated their rebirth, and renewed their commitment to stand for truth and justice for all the victims of genocides in the world.

All of the Armenian organizations operating in Canada had united under the auspices of our three religious denominations and jointly organized events across Canada commemorating this milestone anniversary. These events started on April 14 and culminated on Parliament Hill on Saturday, April 24. This significant memorial ceremony recalled the horrendous crime against humanity. Three members of the House of Commons accompanied the survivors and their descendants to denounce the Denial of the Armenian Genocide and to place flowers around the Eternal Flame. There were also more than two thousand Canadian-Armenians from Montreal, Laval, Ottawa, Toronto, Hamilton, Cambridge, St. Catharines in the commemorative event.

The sombre commemoration began at 12:30 p.m. on April 24, in front of the Parliament Hill. After the welcoming remarks of master of ceremonies Mr. Chahe Tanachian, and Ms. Taline Abrakian, the crowd welcomed the 134 participants of the commemorative march organized by the Armenian Youth Federation. The participants entered the Parliament Hill after a three days' walk that had started with 95 participants from Downtown Montreal's Phillips Square on April 21. Archbishop Khajag Hagopian and Reverend Father Georges Zabarian opened the event with a prayer. The speakers of the day reaffirmed their commitment to justice and expressed their unwavering solidarity with the Armenian people in their struggle to fend off Armenian Genocide Denial.

Mr. Richard Nadeau, Member of Parliament for Gatineau spoke on behalf of Bloc Québécois. The Honourable Jim Karygiannis, Member of Parliament for Scarborough—Agincourt spoke on behalf of the Liberal Party and read the statement of the official leader of the opposition, the Honourable Michael Ignatieff, regarding the Armenian Genocide. After Mr. Karygiannis, the Armenian Community had the

honour to see Michael Wagner, who was especially invited from Italy on the occasion of the 95th Anniversary, deliver a short speech. His father was Armin Theophil Wegner, a German soldier and medic in World War I, stationed in the Ottoman Empire during World War I. Wegner was a witness to the Armenian Genocide and the photographs he took documented the plight of the Armenians. Michael Wegner spoke about his father and urged people to teach new generations about the Armenian Genocide so that similar tragedies do not take place in the future. Mr. Royal Galipeau, Member of Parliament for Ottawa—Orléans spoke on behalf of the ruling Conservative Party.

Following these statements, Mr. Armen Bechakjian-Chairman of AGBU Montreal and Mr. Roupen Kouyoumdjian-Executive Director of the National Office of the Armenian National Committee of Canada in Ottawa spoke in English and French respectively, on behalf of the Joint Committee for the Commemoration of the 95th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide.

Bishop Bagrat Galstianian closed the ceremony with a short statement and a prayer.

The ceremony came to an end at 1:30 p.m. after which flowers were placed next to the eternal flame in memory of the 1.5 million victims. At approximately 2 p.m., the crowd headed to the Turkish Embassy, where during a ceremony organized by united Armenian Youth organizations, once again denounced the Denial of the Armenian Genocide by the Turkish government, and asked for recognition to improve relations between present day Armenia and Turkey.

On Sunday April 25, more than three hundred people gathered in front of the Armenian Genocide monument at the corner of Henri-Bourassa and L'Acadie Streets in Montreal to hold a memorial service for the victims of the Armenian Genocide with the participation of all Armenian organizations operating in Montreal, former and current members of Parliament and the Senate, mayors, city councillors and ministerial representatives. During the service Honourable Senator Leo Housakos and Marcel Prud'Homme, former member of the Parliament Ms. Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral, Mayor of Montreal Gérard Tremblay, and representatives of the Armenian community addressed the crowd. After the ceremony flowers were placed around the monument in memory of the 1.5 million victims.