

Mr. Abraham H. FOXMAN
National Director
Anti-Defamation League of B'Nai B'Rith
823 United Nations Plaza
New York, NY 10017
USA

Istanbul, 22nd August 2007

Dear Abe,

I write to you concerning the "**ADL Statement on the Armenian Genocide**" dated 21st August 2007, in which you add the prestige of the ADL to those who, for all sorts of reasons, have long lobbied for acceptance of the much-disputed claim that the historical events in question constituted a "genocide".

This purpose of this letter is to explain to you the depth of my disappointment and my foreboding.

The Statement's assertion that there is any "consensus" of historians on this matter is absolutely untrue. If there were, this matter would have been closed a long time ago. In fact, reputable and serious historians, having studied the available literature and archival data as professional experts, do not accept that the events of 1915 can properly be described as genocide. Has no one at the ADL read these works? If they had, they would also know that the objectivity of Henry Morgenthau Sr. on this particular question is highly questionable.

While I have boundless respect for the inspiring work and courage of Elie Wiesel, I have never been able to reconcile his brilliant defense of the unique nature of the Holocaust - the very synonym of Genocide - with the view that the Holocaust might somehow also be comparable to the utterly dissimilar events during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

In any case, it is clear that both sides can bring forth the names of eminent scholars: this matter cannot be resolved in that manner, because there is no consensus of distinguished experts and historians.

I simply cannot understand the rationale for the ADL's action in making a pronouncement on one side of a highly sensitive and delicate matter on which you appear to be either uninformed or uncaring, and why this has been done at this particular time.

The massacres and atrocities that undoubtedly occurred in that corner of the collapsing Ottoman Empire at the end of the bloodiest war in human history, are a

tragic and unforgettable part of the histories of the all the victims - Christian Armenians, Moslem and non-Moslem Turks, Kurds and others in an Empire that was after all characterized by centuries of peaceful coexistence of numerous ethnic and religious groups.

This tragedy is also part of the history of those powers who provoked, encouraged and armed insurgent groups in order to hasten the chaotic collapse of the Ottoman state that had (as the ADL has a duty to remember) provided sanctuary for Jews expelled or otherwise persecuted in Europe over centuries.

Russia, France and Great Britain invaded, gave arms, promises and material support to Armenian nationalist groups and gangs. Contemporary accounts of that time are replete with examples of massacres committed by Kurds against Armenians, and by Armenians against Moslem Turks. Is the ADL not aware of these historical facts?

Such chaos and horror marked the ends of other Empires: it was the British who invented the term "concentration camp" in the Boer War; hundreds of thousands were killed in massacres in India and during the Partition. Similar tragedies befell literally millions of people in French and Italian North Africa, in the Belgian Congo, and on every continent in European wars of expansion and colonialism. Rivers of blood have repeatedly flowed in the Balkans. Does the ADL intend to issue Statements and pronouncements declaring all these events as genocides?

By accepting this false comparison between the uniquely indisputable genocide for which the term was coined - the Holocaust, and the events of 1915, the ADL has committed an act of the most inexplicable injustice against the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, as well as against the sensitivities and pride of the Turkish people, who deserve your praise for their centuries-long tradition of compassion and their culture of humanity and cohabitation that remains an example to the world.

If the ADL had listened to wiser and objective counsel, such a terrible mistake could not have been made. I have in the past made strenuous and repeated efforts in writing and in discussions with you and your colleagues, to explain this situation in great detail.

One of the documents that we have previously sent is attached once again. It may begin to show the realities of the situation, and the very deep waters that the ADL has now chosen to stir.

Your Statement concludes very correctly that congressional resolutions are counterproductive, will hinder the reconciliation between Turks and Armenians

that we all desire, will put at risk the Turkish Jewish community and the important multilateral relationship between Turkey, Israel and the United States.

It is perfectly clear that this resolution by the ADL will have exactly the same effect, only the degree of damage differs: how could it possibly be otherwise? This Statement will put back the painstaking efforts by many of us in Turkey, including our brothers in the Armenian Community, to resolve this highly emotive issue without prejudgment. It will now be seized upon by all those who seek to destroy all our work and create discord and bitterness between our countries.

In time, the ADL may understand and accept that you have committed a very great injustice to the memory and status of the Holocaust, to the people and government of my country, and to all those who continue to share our common vision and struggle for reconciliation and for the avoidance of absolutely unnecessary complications in the relations between our countries.

I hope and trust that you will do your utmost to correct the unfortunate situation and perceptions arising from this matter, in continuance of our common efforts to enhance relations between our countries Turkey and the United States of America, and with Israel, based upon our shared vision of hope and humanity for all peoples.

Yours Sincerely,

Jak V. KAMHI

Copy: Prof. Elie Wiesel

Enclosed: Armenian Claims