

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE WAS A CHRISTIAN GENOCIDE

On April 24, Armenian Genocide Remembrance Day, President Biden made a statement on the massacre of the Armenian people that took place in 1915-1916. This was the first of three genocides in the twentieth century; the other two were Stalin's mass killing of the Ukrainians and Hitler's annihilation of the Jews.

We urged President Biden to call the massacre of the Armenians for what it is—genocide. To this day, Turkish leaders take umbrage at any mention of this subject, preferring to live in a state of denial. We should not appease them any longer. Regrettably, too many presidents and senators have failed to speak forthrightly about this issue.

The word “genocide” was coined in 1943 or 1944 (depending on the source) by Polish Jewish writer Raphael Lemkin. Mass killings, he said, amounted to “a crime without a name.” He resolved this problem by splicing the Greek word “genos,” meaning race or people, with the Latin term “caedo,” meaning killing. Hence the word “genocide.”

Biden needed to do more than simply invoke this word. He needed to use this opportunity as a teaching moment, one that informs the world about who did what to whom. That would have meant mentioning those who committed this genocide, namely Muslims, and their victims, namely Christians.

This is not a call to brand all Muslims as supporters of genocide—that is morally indefensible. Indeed it is unconscionable. No, this is a plea to be honest.

Though the number who were killed is not a settled issue, the consensus is that 1.5 million Armenians were murdered, along with 300,000 Assyrians and 750,000 Greeks. All were Christian.

We typically hear that it was the rulers of the Ottoman Empire who carried out the massacre. This is true, but it is incomplete.

William B. Rubinstein is a distinguished historian and author of *Genocide*, one of the most authoritative books on this subject. He notes that "The rulers of the Ottoman Empire traditionally regarded themselves as the leaders of the Islamic world." What they did was not a mistake. Most of the evidence, Rubinstein says, suggests "that the Turkish authorities actively masterminded the mass killing of the Armenians as a deliberate policy."

Why the Armenians? German historian Michael Hesseman does not mince words. "In the end," he says, "Armenians weren't killed because they were Armenians, but because they were Christians." Further proof that the Muslim rulers were motivated by a hatred of Christians is offered by another specialist in this area. "If it [the Armenian Genocide] was a feud between Turks and Armenians, what explains the genocide carried out by Turkey against Christian Assyrians at the same time?"

According to Hudson Institute scholar Lela Glibert, "It is noteworthy that Adolf Hitler found inspiration in the Armenian massacre for his Holocaust of European Jews." Indeed, Hitler knew exactly what the Muslims were doing. "Turkey is taking advantage of the war [World War I] in order to thoroughly liquidate its international foes, i.e., the indigenous Christians, without being thereby disturbed by foreign intervention."

President Biden often speaks glowingly of Pope Francis. He needs to emulate him in more concrete ways. In 2015, the Holy Father called the slaughter of the Armenians "the first genocide of the 20th century." Biden should have expanded on this by acknowledging who did what to whom.