

Gokhan Ozalp

- Elected regional vice president of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA)
- Resident of Walled Lake, Michigan
- Software engineer and manager for a major medical device manufacturer

Dr. Michael M. Gunter

- Professor of political science at Tennessee Technological University in Cookeville, Tennessee where he teaches courses on international relations, international organizations, international law, American foreign policy, European politics, and American politics, among others.
- He is one of only two others who have won the two most prestigious faculty awards at his university: The Outstanding Faculty Award in Teaching and the Outstanding Faculty Award in Research (The Caplenor Award).
- Gunter is the Secretary-General of the EU Turkey Civic Commission (EUTCC) headquartered in Brussels.

Consul General Umut Acar

- Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Chicago.
- Former Chief of Cabinet of the Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

About The Turkish Institute for Progress

The Turkish Institute for Progress (TIP) was founded to help foster a stronger understanding of Turkey-U.S. relations and its vital and strategic role. With a deeper understanding of the role Turkey plays in promoting U.S. interests, particularly on security issues, TIP aims to build a strong bond between these longtime allies. With TIP members and its growing grassroots efforts, TIP works to help educate U.S. decision makers on this vital partnership and the unique challenges Turkey faces.

<http://www.turkishprogress.org/>

Chairman Pavlov and Members of the Senate Education Committee:

1. My name is Gokhan Ozalp. I have resided in Michigan for more than 20 years. I am a software engineer and manager for a major medical device manufacturer. I also serve as the elected regional vice president of the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA).

2. I am a first generation Turkish American. I am married, and have a 9-year old boy. My family resides in Walled Lake in Oakland County. I have another residence in St Clair County, where Chairman Pavlov is my Senator.

3. My family commends and supports the original version of the bill, which focused on the Holocaust. The 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, which defines genocide, was drafted in direct response to the Holocaust.¹

4. The House amendment, which added the Armenian experience as genocide, does not demonstrate the careful education our children should be afforded when studying historical tragedies. The Turkish American Steering Committee (TASC) submitted to the Education Committee, Addenda 1 and 2 which provide the United Nations' 2000, 2007 and 2015 official statements that the UN does not accept the Armenian case as genocide.

5. The House amendment does not demonstrate the knowledge of the vast majority of scholars who qualify as experts on Ottoman History and who believe that the Armenian case, as tragic as it may be, does not constitute genocide. The Turkish American Steering Committee (TASC) submitted to the Education Committee, Addenda 3 and 4 which provide a

¹ Raphael Lemkin coined the term "genocide." It is said that he was inspired by the Armenian case. Importantly, Lemkin was removed from the Genocide Convention drafting committee, when in referring to the Armenian case, he wanted the Convention to protect political groups as well. The United States, Great Britain and Russia disagreed with Lemkin, concluding that such a wide definition would overlaps with other crimes, and could render all wars, counter-insurgencies, and other types of armed conflict genocide.

bibliography of the world's leading historians, such as Princeton University's Bernard Lewis, who stated at the Washington DC National Press Club live on C-SPAN that equating of the massacres of the Armenians with what happened to Jews in Nazi Germany was a downright falsehood.

6. The House amendment does not fully comprehend the federal government's exclusive foreign policy making powers. The House dangerously drags Michigan into foreign policy issues. Joining us today, the Consul General of the Turkish Republic, Mr. Umut Acar, will speak. The issue is the 2012 case of Movsesian vs. Victoria Verisherung AG, in which the Ninth Circuit held 11-0 *en banc* that "the Armenian allegation of genocide continues to be a hotly contested matter of foreign policy around the world." In that case, the Ninth Circuit invalidated a California law that characterized the Armenian case as genocide. Why? Because states are prohibited from promulgating their own foreign policy, especially in contradiction with the federal government's policy. America's foreign policy regarding the Armenian experience is to not characterize it as genocide.²

7. The United States is joined by Europe in not accepting the Armenian case as genocide. In 2015, the European Court of Human Rights High Commission, which exercises jurisdiction over 40 European states, invalidated a Swiss law that made it a crime to disagree with the Armenian point of view. The Court contrasted the Holocaust, stating that the Holocaust was a genocide proven in a court of law, and that the Armenian case, was no more than an allegation that a crime had been committed, and therefore deserved open and free discussion and debate.³ Similarly, in January 2016, the French Supreme Court held that unlike the Holocaust, the Armenian case had not been put to the test of judicial scrutiny and therefore could not possibly be determined to have constituted the crime of genocide.⁴

² *Movesian vs. Victoria Versicherung AG*, 670 F. 3d 1067 (9th Cir. 2012).

³ *Perincek v. Switzerland*, ECHR Application No. 27510/08.

⁴ M. Vincent R., (Décision n° 2015-512 QPC du 8 Janvier 2016).

8. So, what does the Michigan State House know that the United Nations, European Court of Human Rights, United States Federal Courts, and the Supreme Courts of France do not know?

How did we get to where we are today?

9. The answer is that the good people of Armenian heritage in this state have understandably for decades told their side of the story of the horrible conflict between the Ottoman Empire and the Armenian Revolutionary Federation. But, while more than 600,000 Armenians lost their lives or were displaced, Michigan does not know that in the same period in the same lands over 1.1 million Ottoman Muslim and the entire Ottoman Jewish population perished due to the Armenian Revolt that started in 1885 and escalated to full out war in the spring of 1915.

10. The silence of Turkish Americans was due in part to the fact that in our culture we did not learn to transfer our pain inter-generationally, though over 4 million Ottoman Muslims and 100,000 Ottoman Jews perished in World War I.

11. The silence of Turkish Americans was also due to the fact that we are relatively new to this great nation, and our priorities have been to work hard, save money, buy a house, send our children to college, and basically to chase the American Dream.

12. What you don't know is that the silence of Turkish Americans is also due to fear. Armenian terrorists assassinated four Turkish diplomats on American soil, two Turkish diplomats in Canada, and a Canadian law enforcement officer just over the border in Toronto. This terrorism wounded dozens of North Americans in numerous bombings. It placed us Turkish Americans in fear of stating our side of the story. Indeed, Armenian violent extremism even targeted many of scholars who are listed in Addendum 4 of the Letter of the Turkish American National Steering Committee (TASC).

13. We are thankful that the federal authorities have taken Armenian terrorism seriously, after more than 70 deaths worldwide and more than 700 seriously injured in mass bombings, similar to what happened in Brussels and Ankara recently. In this peace and security, we Turkish Americans have just started to tell our side of the story. We are pleading to Michigan legislators not to prosecute, judge and convict our community of the high crime of genocide and not to punish our children in the state's school texts books.

14. As a father, the best I can do for my child in this situation is to ask that the rule of law be applied to our community, as would be applied even to a single person charged with the smallest of crimes. I ask for the presumption of innocence and benefit of the doubt for my child.

15. The best the Senate could do is to require the study of genocides that have actually been past the test of judicial scrutiny. For this reason, we support the Turkish American National Steering Committee (TASC)'s recommendation to remove all references to the Armenian experience, and to include the following amendment:

“Genocide is a crime specifically defined by the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide (the “Genocide Convention”) and Title 18 Section 1091 of the United States Code. For the purposes of the revised school code, genocide shall be solely those events adjudged to be genocide by a court of competent jurisdiction applying the definition provided by the Genocide Convention and the U.S. Code.”

16. Thank You for your consideration.

ADDENDUM 1
U.N. STATEMENT



STATEMENT

U.N. Spokesperson Farhan Haq



New York, 9 April 2007 and 10 October 2000

As for Armenia, in any case, the UN has not expressed any position on incidents that took place long before the United Nations was established. 9 April 2007.

The UN has not approved or endorsed a report labeling the Armenian Experience as genocide. 19 October 2000.

Provided by the Turkish American National Steering Committee (TASC)
c/o 1050 K Street NW Suite 1150
Washington DC 20001



STATEMENT

U.N. Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric



New York, 13 April 2015

The Secretary General is mindful that, on 24 April of this year, Armenia and others around the world commemorate the centenary of the tragic events of 1915.

He's also fully aware of the sensitivities related to the characterization of what happened in 1915, 100 years ago.

The Secretary General firmly believes that commemorating and remembering those tragic events of 1915 and continuing to cooperate with a view to establishing the facts about what happened should strengthen our collective determination to prevent similar atrocity crimes from ever happening in the future.

Provided by the Turkish American National Steering Committee (TASC)
c/o 1050 K Street NW Suite 1150
Washington DC 20001

ADDENDUM 3
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY HISTORIAN BERNARD LEWIS
C-SPAN TRANSCRIPT

**THE VAST MAJORITY OF EXPERTS ON THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
DO NOT DEFINE THE ARMENIAN CASE AS GENOCIDE**

Turkish Americans acknowledge the massacres of Ottoman Armenians, while they also remember the deaths and displacements of over 1.1 million Ottoman Muslims and Jews who perished in eastern Anatolia under the same conditions of civil war and Russian invasions.

Turkish Americans believe, however, that the Armenian Tragedy does not constitute genocide. For this, they rely on the findings of experts on Ottoman history, the vast majority of whom do not accept the Armenian case as genocide, such as Bernard Lewis, David Fromkin, Guenther Lewy, Andrew Mango, Tal Buenos, Michael Gunter, Christopher Gunn, Avigdor Levy, Stanford Shaw, Masaki Kakizaki, Norman Stone, Edward Erickson, Heath Lowry, and Justin McCarthy, to list just a few notables.

The following critical observation is by Princeton University Ottoman Historian, Professor Bernard Lewis, author of dozens of books on Turkey, Islam and the Middle East:

[T]hat the massacre of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire was the same as what happened to Jews in Nazi Germany is a downright falsehood. What happened to the Armenians was the result of a massive Armenian armed rebellion against the Turks, which began even before war broke out, and continued on a larger scale.

But to make this a parallel with the holocaust in Germany, you would have to assume the Jews of Germany had been engaged in an armed rebellion against the German state, collaborating with the allies against Germany. That in the deportation order, the cities of Hamburg and Berlin were exempted, persons in the employment of the state were exempted, and the deportation only applied to the Jews of Germany proper, so that when they got to Poland they were welcomed and sheltered by the Polish Jews. This seems to me a rather absurd parallel".¹

¹ April 14, 2002, at the National Press Club on C-Span 2

SOURCES ON ARMENIAN CASE

Books

1. Courbage, Youssef, and Fargues, Philippe. *Christians and Jews under Islam*. London: Tauris I.B., 1997. 109-11. Print.
2. De Nogales, Rafael, *Four Years Beneath the Crescent*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1926. Print.
3. Erickson, Edward J., *Ordered To Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2001. Print.
4. Erickson, Edward J., *Ottomans and Armenians: A Study in Counterinsurgency*, Palgrave McMillan, New York, 2013. Print.
5. Feigl, Erich. *A Myth of Terror: Armenian Extremism, Its Causes and Its Historical Context: An Illustrated Exposé*. Freilassing, Germany: Edition Zeitgeschichte, 1986. Print.
6. Gates, Caleb Frank, *Not To Me Only*, Princeton University, Princeton & London, 1940. Print.
7. Gautherot, Gustave, *La France en Syrie et en Cilicie*, Librairie Indépendente", Courbevoie (Seine), 1920. Print.
8. Goren, Roberta, *The Soviet Union and Terrorism*, George Allen & Unwin, London, 1984. Print.
9. Gunter, Michael M., Chapter: "The Armenian Question." *"Pursuing the Just Cause of Their People": A Study of Contemporary Armenian Terrorism*. New York: Greenwood, 1986. Print.
10. Gunter, Michael M., *Pursuing the Just Cause of Their People; A Study of Contemporary Armenian Terrorism*, Greenwood Press, New York, 1986. Print.
11. Gürün, Kamuran, *The Armenian File, The Myth of Innocence Exposed*, Rustem, Nicosia, 2001. Print.

12. Herbert Aubrey, Ben Kendim: A Record of Eastern Travel, Hutchinson & Co., London, 1924. Print.
13. Ilter, Erdal, *Armenian and Russian Oppressions: 1914-1916*, Köksav, Ankara, 1999. Print.
14. Jackh, Ernest, *The Rising Crescent: Turkey Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., New York, 1944. Print.
15. Lewis, Bernard. *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Print.
16. Langer, William L. *The Diplomacy of Imperialism: 1890-1902*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1972. Print.
17. Lewy, Guenter. *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey: A Disputed Genocide*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 2005. Print.
18. Lowry, Heath W., *The Story Behind Ambassador Morgenthau's Story*. Istanbul, Turkey: Isis, 1990. Print.
19. Lowry, Heath W. *The U.S. Congress and Adolf Hitler on the Armenians, Political Communication and Persuasion, Institute of Turkish Studies III.2* (1985). Print.
20. Mango, Andrew. *Ataturk*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook TP, 2000. Print.
21. Mango, Andrew. *The Turks Today*. New York: Overlook TP, 2004. 22-23. Print.
22. Mango, Andrew, *Ataturk: The Biography of the Founder of Modern Turkey*, The Overlook Press, New York, 1999. Print.
23. McCarthy, Justin, *The Armenian Rebellion at Van*. Salt Lake City, UT, University of Utah, 2006. Print.
24. McCarthy, Justin, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, The Darwin Press, Princeton, 1995. Print.
25. McCarthy, Justin, *Muslims and Minorities*, New York, 1983. Print.
26. McCarthy, Justin, *The Ottoman Peoples and The End of Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2001. Print.

27. McCarthy, Justin. *The Turk in America: Creation of an Enduring Prejudice*. Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah, 2010. Print.
28. Miller, Geoffrey, *Straits, British Policy Towards the Ottoman Empire and the Origins of the Dardanelles Campaign*, The University of Hull Press, Hull, 1997. Print.
29. Nalbandian, Louise. *The Armenian Revolutionary Movement; The Development of Armenian Political Parties through the Nineteenth Century*. Berkeley: University of California, 1963. Print.
30. Öke, Mim K. *The Armenian Question: 1914-1923*. Lefkoşa, Nicosia: K. Rustem & Brother, 1988. Print.
31. Orel, Sinasi and Yuca, Sureyya, *The Talat Pasha Telegrams, Historical Fact or Armenian Fiction?*, K. Rustem and Brother, Nicosia, 1986. Print.
32. Papazian, K.S. *Patriotism Perverted*, Boston, Baika Press, 1934. Print.
33. Powell, E. Alexander, *The Struggle for Power in Moslem Asia*, Progressive Books, Lahore, 1976. Print.
34. Salt, Jeremy. *The Unmaking of the Middle East: A History of Western Disorder in Arab Lands*. Berkeley, CA: University of California, 2008. Print.
35. Schreiner, George Abel, *Entente Diplomacy and The World: Matrix of the History of Europe, 1909 - 14*, The Knickerbocker Press, New York, 1921. Print.
36. Schreiner, George Abel, *From Berlin to Bagdad: Behind the Scenes in the Near East*, Harper and Brothers Publication, New York, 1918. Print.
37. Schreiner, George Abel, *The Craft Sinister*, G. Albert Geyer, New York, 1920. Print.
38. Shaw, Stanford J., and Ezel Kural Shaw. *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Volume 2, Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey 1808-1975*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. 314-217. Print.
39. Simsir, Bilal N. *British Documents on Ottoman Armenians - Volume I (1856-1880)*. Ankara: Turkish Historical Association, 1989. Print.
40. Sonyel, Salahi R. *The Ottoman Armenians: Victims of Great Power Diplomacy*. London: K. Rustem & Brother, 1987. Print.

41. Sykes, Mark, *Dar-ul-Islam: A Record of a Journey Through Ten of the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey*, Darf Publishers Limited, London, 1988. Print.
42. Sykes, Mark, *The Caliph's Last Heritage: A short History of the Turkish Empire*, MacMillan and Co., London, 1915. Print.
43. Valyi, Felix, *Europe In Asia Minor: The Real Significance of the Near East Question*, Second Edition, Thomas Murby and Co., London, 1922. Print.
44. Weems, Samuel A., *Armenia: Secrets of a Christian Terrorist State*, St. John Press, Dallas, 2002. Print.
45. Yalman, Ahmed Emin, *Turkey in the World War*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1930. Print.
46. Zeidner, Robert F. *The Tricolor over the Taurus: the French in Cilicia and Vicinity, 1918-1922*. Ankara: Turkish Historical Society (TKK), 2005. 43+. Print.

Articles, Reviews, and Interviews

1. Chester, Commander Arthur Tremaine, "Angora and the Turks", *The New York Times Current History Journal*, February 1923. Print.
2. Dewey, John, "The Turkish Tragedy," *The New Republic*, Vol. 40, November 12, 1928. Print.
3. Dyer, Gwynne. "Turkish 'Falsifiers' and Armenian 'Deceivers': Historiography and the Armenian Massacres." *Middle Eastern Studies* 12.1 (1976): 99-107. Print.
4. Erickson, Edward J. "Armenian Massacres, New Records Undercut Old Blame." *Middle East Quarterly* XIII.3 (2006). Print.
5. Erickson, Edward J. "The Armenians and Ottoman Military Policy, 1915." *War in History* 15.2 (2008): 141-67. Print.
6. Gunter, Michael M., Review of "*Starving Armenians: America and the Armenian Genocide, 1915-1930 and After*", by Merrill D. Peterson. *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37.2 (2005): 296-97. Print.
7. Hamlin, Cyrus, *Among The Turks*, American Tract Society, New York, 1877. Print.

8. Henze, Paul B. "The Roots of Armenian Violence. How Far Back Do They Extend?" *International Terrorism and the Drug Connection*, Ankara UP (1984). Print.
9. Jäckel, Eberhard. "Genocide or Not? Hundred Thousands of Armenians Died in 1915/16 without Any Intent: (Genozid Oder Nicht? Hunderttausende Armenier Kamen 1915/16 Wohl Ohne Absicht Um)." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* [Frankfurt, Germany] 23 Mar. 2006. Print.
10. Karpel, Dalia. "There Was No Genocide: Interview with Prof. Bernard Lewis." *Ha'aretz* [Tel Aviv, Israel] 23 Jan. 1998. Print.
11. Lewis, Bernard. "The Islamic World." Interview. *National Press Club*. C-SPAN 2. Washington, D.C., 25 Mar. 2002. Television. Transcript.
12. Lewy, Guenter. "Revisiting the Armenian Genocide", *Middle East Quarterly* XII.7 (2005): 3-12. Print.
13. Lewy, Guenter, "Review of The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies", by Richard Hovannisian. *Slavic Review* 67.4 (2008): 1000-001. Print.
14. McCarthy, Justin, Chapter: "The Final War in the East." *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922*, Princeton, NJ: Darwin, 2004. Print.
15. Radu, Michael, "The Dangers of the Armenian Genocide Resolution", *Foreign Policy Research Institute* (March 2007). *FPRI E-Note*. Web.
16. Stone, Norman, "There Is No Armenian Genocide", Editorial. *Journal of Turkish Weekly* [Ankara, Turkey] 21 Oct. 2006. Print.
17. Yapp, Malcolm E., *Review* of "The History of the Armenian Genocide", by Vahakn N. Dadrian. *Middle Eastern Studies* 32.4 (1996): 395-397. Print.



Media Contact:
Oussama Jammal
Secretary General
[202-683-6557](tel:202-683-6557)
[708-288-1914](tel:708-288-1914)
ojammal@uscmo.org

USCMO Statement on 1915 Turkish-Armenian Events

(Washington, DC, April 19, 2015) -- The US Council of Muslim Organizations (USCMO) the largest umbrella group of mainstream Muslim American organizations is aware of the painful history of over 30 nations fighting for over 4 years and the loss of over 37 million lives in World War I, including those of the Armenians.

As [April 24](#) comes near, we share the pain suffered by Armenians during this period. We also believe that any acknowledgment by religious or political leaders of the tragedy that befell Armenians should be balanced, constructive and must also recognize Turkish and Muslim suffering.

In this respect, characterizing the events of 1915 as genocide without proper investigation of these events by independent historians will not only jeopardize the establishment of a just memory pertaining to these events, but will also damage the efforts aimed at achieving reconciliation between Turks and Armenians.

As Americans, we are concerned about alienating a key ally, Turkey, through one-sided declarations that political and religious leaders have made on this subject. The events of 100 years ago should be based on a consensus among historians and academicians with access to archives and documents from that era.

As the only Muslim-majority member of NATO and current President of the G-20 Summit, Turkey has taken on a unique regional and global leadership role in ensuring peace and prosperity for all. Our government has been closely cooperating with the Turkish government on defeating ISIS while also alleviating the suffering of Syrian refugees.

While Muslim Americans sympathize deeply with the loss of Armenian lives in 1915, we also believe that reconciliation must take into honest account the broader human tragedy of World War I. Muslim Americans expect our leaders to act accordingly to ensure that American-Turkish strategic relations are not damaged by a one-sided interpretation of the 1915 events.