

Copy of message sent to [feedback@pov.org](mailto:feedback@pov.org) on Nov. 5, 2023 in connection with the airing of *Aurora's Sunrise*, a supposed documentary film, by PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) on October 23, 2023. Recipient confirmed receipt of the message, but provided no commentary.

PBS (Public Broadcasting Service) TV kanalının 23 Ekim 2023'de sözde belgesel *Aurora's Sunrise* filmini göstermesine ilişkin [feedback@pov.org](mailto:feedback@pov.org) adresine 5 Kasım 2023'de gönderilen mesajın kopyası. Mesajın alındığı doğrulandı; ancak bir görüş bildirilmedi.

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*Oh, Mama mia, here we go again! "Aurora's Sunrise," with all those phantasies and fabrications. My dear Aurora Mardiganian, My sweet heart, where are those crucified 16 young girls tormented by Ottoman soldiers? Mama mia, My my, how can I resist you, tell me more lies.*

*Aurora's Sunrise* is a 1 hr. 23 min. film re-telling the story of Arshaluys (Aurora) Mardiganian, the Armenian girl who survived "Armenian genocide" at age 14 and moved to America at age 16. Her supposed memories, published in 1917 when she was 17, were turned into a book, *Ravished Armenia* in 1918, and later into a Hollywood movie *Auction of Souls* in 1919. *Aurora's Sunrise* is a re-making of *Auction of Souls* in animated form, where she re-tells her original story. The film had its world premiere in France in June 2022, and aired by PBS, a supposedly respectable organization serving as America's largest public media enterprise, on October 23, 2023. It was made possible - not surprisingly - with the "academic contribution" (notice the word "academic") of the Zoryan Institute, which, together with other Armenian sources, contributed to the production of the film.

<https://www.pbs.org/pov/films/aurorasunrise/?gclid=CjwKCAjw1t2pBhAFEiwA -A-NCiIoN1LJ JmfLEQcvOX62Fy5S OKJ5HYG JkLcMrIUvtOhfdnR7JhoCMj0QA vD BwE>

Shamefully, *Aurora's Sunrise* is peddled as a documentary film. In reality, it is a despicable mockery of history and international law, aimed at vilifying Turks as heartless barbarians. The film goes one more step than the original *Auction of Souls* in throwing dirt and slime on Turks. According to Aurora, crucifixion of the girls depicted in the original movie was inaccurate. The reality was far too grim, she says. "The Armenian girls were actually ordered to bend down, then raped, then they made them sit on the "kazık"(pointed wood), through the vagina. That's the way they killed." Crucifixion was "too civilized," she comments. The movie contains many horrific and sickening scenes of tortured humans splattered across the countryside. The villain is the cruel, heartless Turk. At one point, she brings up the fictitious "Hitler's Armenian quote" to support the "Armenian genocide" allegation, even though the document bearing this quote was denied as evidence during the Nuremberg trials. She says, "If Turks were punished after WW-I, Jews wouldn't have been massacred." Such outrageous comment, and attempting to defraud the audience!

And at the end of the movie she maligns Kemal Atatürk, the legendary Turkish leader praised by many world leaders and honored by the United Nations and UNESCO. Atatürk is blamed for building a new Türkiye "by massacring his way across Armenian land." She concludes that "Turks should not be really killed with guns or swords; they must be brought down to the chair," implying death by hanging!

Such repulsive language, not to mention grotesque distortion of truth, is almost unheard of in today's America. The exception, of course, is the hatred-filled campaign directed against Türkiye and Turks coming from the Armenian lobby, e.g., ANCA and ARF. The Armenian lobby is not only contributing to, but also riding high on the enduring prejudice born of history and Islamophobia in America, i.e., the "Terrible Turk" versus the good, Christian Armenians. Certainly echoes of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, who called Turks "primitive," possessing "poisonous blood," and President Woodrow Wilson characterizing them as "Mohammedan Apaches." The prejudice is the result of distorted missionary reports combined with British propaganda (Wellington House) before and during First World War. Native Americans and black Africans brought as slaves to America know such bigotry and derision too well.

And imagine only half of such calumny is brought onto the Jews in America. The Jewish organization ADL (Anti-Defamation League) would scream in protest, and PBS would be in deep trouble. Where are the Turks and the diplomatic representatives of Türkiye to protest such hate speech and character assassination?

The only shred of truth in *Aurora's Sunrise* is that Armenians in the Ottoman Empire were a privileged group, in fact a "loyal nation," and could afford sending their children abroad for education. Even the Foreign Minister in the Ottoman cabinet in 1913 was an Armenian named Gabriel Noradukian. But such privilege was not enough, and during World War-I the Armenians joined the invading enemy armies and attacked and sabotaged the Ottoman Army from behind, all for the glory of the Allies, chiefly the Russians. It was an armed uprising against their government. The insurrection and attack on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021 was a measly child's play by comparison. The Ottoman government had no choice but relocate Armenians to the south toward Syria. Only those in Eastern Anatolia were subjected to Relocation orders. Armenian militants burned the city of Van, and handed the city to the advancing Russian army. Their aim was to carve out an independent Armenia in Eastern Anatolia, where the Armenian population was at most 22%. Even the Dashnak luminary Hovhannes Katchaznoui called attention to the misjudgment and blunder of the Armenian militants, and Boghos Nubar Pasha of the Paris Peace Conference fame admitted the treasonous act of the Armenian militants.

The claimed death of 1.5 million of Armenian refugees during Relocation is a preposterous exaggeration; Turkish archives put the Armenian deaths at 56,600, 10,000 of which were killings due to lawlessness. Those that intentionally harmed Armenian refugees were punished by the Ottoman courts. Some of the punishments were death-by-hanging.

Commander Andranik, recalled in glowing terms by *Aurora*, was an Ottoman traitor and mass murderer. In 1915 he was named commander of all Armenian volunteer units within the Russian army. Both Andranik and "Dro" Drastamat Kanayan, another Armenian general who later served in Nazi Germany as commander of the Armenian battalion, were war criminals, being responsible for the killing of tens of thousands of helpless and innocent Turkish and Muslim civilians. Both Andranik and "Dro" are considered patriots by Armenia and the Armenian lobby. Between 1914 and 1921 renegade Armenian bands killed 518,000 civilians in cold-blood in Anatolia. There were also 413,000 losses in the Transcaucasian region – not to mention the 1 million that perished during forced migration. Armenian atrocities were witnessed and documented by, among others, Captain E. Niles and A. Sutherland of Near East Relief and Rear Admiral Marc L. Bristol, the successor

of Ambassador Henry Morgenthau as the U.S. High Commissioner to Türkiye between 1919 and 1927. The atrocities are also reported in Russian, British and French archives.

The calamity brought upon Muslims - in particular Turkish civilians - by Armenian militias is a story untold in Europe and America, and certainly not in a fictional story championed by PBS.

In 1985, 69 U.S. historians and researchers passed a unanimous resolution, addressed to members of the U.S. House of Representatives and published in *New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, refuting Armenian allegations. In 2011, 124 Turkish academicians signed a statement supporting the 1985 declaration.

As for international law, suffice it say that the recognition of “Armenian genocide” clearly violates the *1948 UN Convention on Genocide*, ratified or acceded to by 152 states. The U.S. ratified the Convention in 1948, Türkiye acceded, or effectively ratified, in 1950, and likewise Armenia acceded in 1993. The Convention requires (Art. 6) that “Persons charged with genocide”... shall be tried by a competent tribunal ... of the State where the act was committed ... or by an international penal tribunal that has the proper jurisdiction. The main takeaways from the Convention are: 1: The crime of genocide is committed by persons, not by states. 2: To recognize genocide, determination by a competent court is a must.

Yet, with respect to the so-called “Armenian genocide,” there exists no such court determination; repeat, NONE. This contrasts with the Rwandan, Bosnian and Cambodian genocides, all of which were established and ratified by ad hoc tribunals.

There is, of course, the claim from some Armenian sources that the Ottoman courts martial of 1919-20 issued death sentences to the leaders of the “Committee of Unity and Progress” that gave the Relocation orders, and hence responsible for Armenian deaths. But these courts, operating under the leadership of Nemrut Mustafa Pasha, were “kangaroo courts” established at the instigation of the victorious Allied Powers. They issued death sentences also to the leaders of the Nationalist Movement, including Mustafa Kemal. With no due process, no witnesses, no cross-examination, etc., the courts lacked credibility, and certainly did not qualify as “competent courts” referred to in the Convention. The Allies considered these courts a travesty of justice, with British High Commissioner Admiral Somerset Arthur Gough-Calthorpe writing to London on August 1, 1919, that these courts were “proving to be a farce and injurious to our own prestige.”

The “Armenian genocide” narrative, not having the requisite determination by a competent court, raises the obvious question: Given that Türkiye does not recognize “Armenian genocide,” why Armenia, after it gained its sovereignty from the Soviet Russia in 1991, has not to date appealed to the International Court of Justice to prove its “genocide” allegations against its adversary? Same question applies to the Armenian lobby, which could have pursued a similar course by appealing to the UN for establishment of an ad hoc tribunal. Certainly, for both Armenia and the Armenian lobby the day-in, day-out propaganda, riding on the anti-Turk prejudice and Christian sensibilities, and fed by generous political campaign contributions, was far more preferable.

In 2003 the European Union’s Court of First Instance ruled that the “Armenian genocide” resolution passed by the European Parliament in 1987 was purely a political act – devoid of any

legal validity. The European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) ruled, in 2013, ratified in 2015, that “Armenian genocide,” apart from the fact that it is a controversial issue among scholars, remains **unproven**. It also made a distinction between the court-proven Holocaust and the 1915 events in Ottoman Turkey. In 2016 France’s Constitutional Council, while also making a distinction between the 1915 events and Holocaust, underlined that governments and parliaments have no authority to judge genocide. Repeat: **parliaments and governments have no authority**. All these facts, on top of the fact that the Malta Tribunal held by the British in 1919-21 resulted in the conviction of not a single high Ottoman government official charged with killing of Armenians; all 144 detainees were released. And the UN, on three separate occasions in 2000, 2007 and 2015, stated unequivocally that it has not taken a position on “Armenian genocide,” i.e., it does not recognize such “genocide.” As late as April 22, 2021, Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN Secretary-General, issued a statement that the crime of genocide must be decided by a relevant court, i.e., determination by a relevant (competent) court is a must, not an option.

So, what do we say about the “Armenian genocide” resolution passed by the U.S. Congress in 2019, plus President Biden’s recognition of the “genocide” since 2021? They are simply worthless declarations, or opinions, but carrying much political garbage against Türkiye. Forget about seeking the views of the opposing Turkish side; the law-abiding Congressmen and women didn’t even bother to question the authenticity of “Armenian genocide” or consider the international legal ramifications of the resolution they voted on. They simply rubber-stamped what was put in front of them by the Armenian lobby. The passage of the resolution by both the House and Senate in 2019 was driven by a mob mentality charged with political undercurrents and a sense of recrimination against an unfavored, barely tolerable, NATO ally. In the Senate, the all-time-high Türkiye critic Robert Menendez, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, now indicted on a number of federal charges, even shed tears when the resolution passed. *Oh, Mama mia, all these tears, how sad!* Likewise, Biden couldn’t resist saying “genocide.” Bigotry comes cheap. There were also generous campaign contributions from the Armenian side to consider.

As for PBS, this is not the first time it succumbed to Armenian lobby’s pressure to besmirch Türkiye and Turks. There were at least four previous productions aired by PBS that brought up the prejudicial “Armenian genocide” issue. The last one, aired on April 17, in 2006, titled *Armenian Genocide*, pulled out all the stops to demonize Turks and please Armenians. Playing the religion card, it mocked not only history and international law, at the beginning it showed a macabre image of a pyramid of human skulls, to make the audience think that these were the remains of Armenian victims killed by murderous Turks. In reality, it was “The Apotheosis of War,” a mid-19th century painting by Russian war artist Vasily Vereshchagin. The scheme to fool the audience obviously did not bother the producer. Not surprisingly, the film was bankrolled by more than 30 largely Armenian foundations in America. Despite appeals from the Turkish side, PBS also declined to air, as a balancing act, another film, *The Armenian Revolt*, that gives a balanced presentation of the Turkish-Armenian conflict. Because it refuted “Armenian genocide,” PBS wouldn’t air it. So much about being “open minded” by America’s largest public media enterprise!

*Mama mia, Mama mia, Aurora Mardiganian, the virtuous Christian girl; tell me more lies, tell me more about those “gavur” (infidel) Turks ...* History, international law, decency and humanity have gone berserk; hatred and dishonesty have taken over. Ethnic harmony in America is at stake. America, where LAW is the king, and “due process” for the accused is a right. When the Congress

and Biden recognized “Armenian genocide,” not a single soul sought the opinion of the accused side. Obviously, politically motivated accusations don’t have to comply with such legal niceties! Armenian fabrications, and Türkiye and-Turk-bashing in America started more than a century ago, and are still continuing today almost unabated. Between 1973 and 1987 the Armenian ASALA and JCAG terrorist groups committed 239 acts of terrorism that resulted in the massacre of at least 70 and the wounding of 524 innocent people. Some of the terrorism took place on U.S. soil. Of the dead, 58 were Turkish, of which 31 were diplomats. These were hate crimes motivated by hate-mongering propaganda from the Armenian side; a propaganda that is disgracefully supported by PBS – a supposedly educational media that “helps prepare children for success in school.” What a hypocrisy!

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