



Legislation Text

File #: 15-0354, **Version:** 1

Recommendation to respectfully request the Mayor and City Council to join with cities, states and countries in commemorating the 100th Anniversary of a tragic period in our collective human rights history known as the Armenian Genocide; and

Request City Attorney to draft a resolution recognizing the Armenian Genocide and its place in history.

In 2014, Governor Jerry Brown declared in a proclamation that, “between 1915 and 1923, Armenians were subjected to torture, starvation, mass murder and exile from their historic homeland... The Armenian Genocide, also known as the "First Genocide of the Twentieth Century," represented a deliberate attempt by the Ottoman Empire to eliminate all traces of a thriving, noble civilization.” In fact, the State of California has commemorated this horrible atrocity nearly every year going back to Governor George Deukmejian in 1986. California is home to the largest Armenian-American population in the United States.

Recognized as the “Armenian Holocaust”, the “Armenian Massacres” and, traditionally by Armenians as “Medz Yeghern” (“Great Crime”), the starting date is conventionally held to be April 24, 1915, the day Ottoman Empire authorities rounded up and arrested some 250 Armenian intellectuals and community leaders in its capital, Constantinople. Many of these prominent figures in the Armenian community were summarily executed in an Anatolian prison shortly thereafter. Over the course of 8 years, approximately 1.5 million Armenian people were subjected to deportation, expropriation, abduction, torture, massacre, and starvation. The great bulk of the Armenian population was forcibly removed from Armenia and Anatolia to Syria, where the vast majority was sent into the desert to die of thirst and hunger. Large numbers of Armenians were methodically massacred throughout the Ottoman Empire. Women and children were abducted and horribly abused. (Armenian-Genocide.org). It is considered by many historians the prototype for the genocides and/or holocausts which followed in the 20th century.

Such heinous crimes against humanity have occurred throughout history and the world over. However, it is important that we acknowledge their occurrence and the underlying factors that lead to violence abroad and stateside. As pointed out in California Assembly Joint Resolution No. 35, “By consistently remembering and forcefully condemning the atrocities committed against the Armenians, and honoring the survivors as well as other victims of similar heinous conduct, we guard against repetition of such acts of genocide and provide the American public with a greater understanding of its

heritage.” (May 5, 2014)

There is no fiscal impact.

Approve recommendation.

VICE MAYOR SUJA LOWENTHAL
COUNCILMEMBER, SECOND DISTRICT