JERUSALEM SQUARE NAMED AFTER ARMENIAN PHOTOGRAPHER

Posted on September 5, 2025 by Keghart



Category: Opinions

Zartonk, 7 July 2025

In a rare public tribute, the Jerusalem Municipality has named a square after Elia Kahvedjian — a survivor of the Armenian Genocide and one of the city's most beloved photographers. The move honors his legacy as both an eyewitness to atrocity and a lifelong documentarian of Jerusalem's soul. This was reported on X by Kegham Balian, a Jerusalemite Armenian.

The Hebrew inscription reads: "Elia Kahvedjian Square – Survivor of the Armenian Genocide, photographer, lover of Jerusalem."

Born in Urfa, Turkey, to an Armenian family, Elia was just five years old in 1915 when he witnessed the uprising of Urfa's Armenian residents against the Turkish army, sparked by growing reports of targeted massacres across the Ottoman Empire. When the revolt was crushed, his father and one of his brothers were killed, and the remaining Armenian population—including women, children, and the elderly—was forced on a death march to the Syrian Deir ez-Zor desert, widely considered the "Auschwitz of the Armenian Genocide."



Elia Haroutune Kahvedjian 1910-1999

Before dying, his mother saved him by entrusting him to a Kurdish stranger, who eventually sold him for two gold coins to a blacksmith. Elia later found himself begging for food and shelter in the streets until he was discovered, at age 10, along with 10,000 other children, by the Near East Relief



humanitarian organization. He was sent to orphanages in Aleppo, Nazareth, and eventually Jerusalem, where he would begin a new life, and a lifelong journey in photography paved with success and worldwide acclaim.

More than 100 of Elia's family members—siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins, and parents—were systematically murdered during the Armenian Genocide in 1915, which claimed the lives of 1.5 million Armenians at the hands of the Ottoman Empire.

Today, his legacy is preserved by his grandson, Eli Kahvedjian, in his photo gallery *Elia Photo Service*, located in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Yet despite this long-overdue tribute in the heart of Jerusalem, Israel still refuses to officially recognize the Armenian Genocide.

There are no comments yet.