

REMEMBRANCE DAY IN MEMORY OF THE MARTYRS

Posted on April 26, 2009 by Keghart



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By Reporter, 26 April 2009

On Saturday, 25th of April, a ceremonial assembly gathered at Magaros Artinian Hall of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church. The highlight of the day was the presence of Ms. Melissa Bhagat, a senior regional advisor for Minister of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism. Her brief, but singularly potent speech was punctuated with spontaneous applause and expressions of gratitude. She presented The Right Honourable Stephen Harper's [statement](#) and Honourable Jason Kenney's letter addressed to the Armenian community.



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The opening words of the Prime Minister's statement read, "On this day we remember the terrible loss of life during the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1915, and in particular the horrific suffering endured by the Armenian people. I have reminded all Canadians that both Houses of Parliament have adopted resolutions recognizing "the first genocide of the twentieth century."

Following salutations, Honourable Jason Kenney writes, "I am keenly aware of the great impact Armenians have had on Canadian society. The Armenian community has long enriched Canadian society with skills, knowledge and talent, and your efforts continue to contribute to the social, economic and political fabric of our society."

The United Toronto Armenian Organisations' Committee for the Commemoration of the Genocide hosted this event under the auspices of His Eminence Bishop Bagrat Galstanian, Primate of the Armenian Church of Canada.

The gathering started with a wreath laying ceremony, and singing of the anthems of Canada and Armenia. Pupils of AGBU Zarukian, St. Gregory, St. Sahag & St. Mesrob schools presented poems and songs. It was interesting to listen to the recitation of the timeline of Armenian history with highlights of significant events throughout the centuries and the Genocide of the Armenians.

The Nairi Choir, conducted by Mr. Sarkis Hamboyan left a superb impression on the audience with the choice of the songs and the impeccable quality of performance. They undoubtedly uplifted the spirit of the audience, and provided both a unique artistic enjoyment and a patriotic experience. Here is a portion of the performance:



Dr. Dikran Abrahamian [was the guest speaker](#). After an analysis of the present day circumstances hindering the ongoing efforts of Hay Tad - Armenian Cause - he underlined the importance of expanding its scope beyond recognition of the Genocide of the Armenians by various countries. He proposed to call 24th of April Պահանջատիրութեան Օր - Day of Demand - in addition to Day of Remembrance.

The speaker talked about amending the present strategy of struggle by presenting to international courts the Armenian demands, including recognition, reparations and return of lands. Following a scathing critique of the Armenian parties, he concluded his passionate speech with a call for co-operation amongst the various organizations, political parties and individuals who pursue Hay Tad.

The Holy Trinity Armenian Church Pastor, [Rev. Archpriest Zareh Zargarian](#) concluded the evening. He reminded all present that Armenia's security is in grave danger, and focused on the overwhelming need of support for Armenia. He emphasized that keeping what Armenians possess is a high priority.

The Armenian Social Democrat Henschak Party, Armenian Democratic Liberal Organization, Armenian General Benevolent Union, Knights of Vartan, Bolsahay, Nor-Serount, and Tekeyan Cultural Associations participated in this undertaking. The presence of many young people and the hall being full, with some people standing, were encouraging signs of a healthy and vibrant community.

Keghart.com has agreed to provide portions of the Remembrance Day in video form over the coming days.

