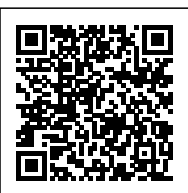


ROLE OF KURDS IN THE GENOCIDE OF ARMENIANS

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 **Syndicated News**, 23 April 2014

By Deniz Serinci, [Rudaw](#)

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"If many Armenians live now, it is because the Kurds in some areas protected them," Ungor said.

"The leader of the Nurcu Movement Saidi Nursi, or Saidi Kurdi as the Kurds call him, was probably involved in rescuing hundreds of Armenian children by delivering them to the Russians," he said.

Those who participated in the killings did so because of economic and geopolitical reasons, according to Taner Akcam, a historian at Clark University in the United States and one of the first Turkish academics to acknowledge and openly discuss the Armenian genocide.

"The Kurdish tribes were used by the Turkish government against the Armenians, because the Kurds claimed the same territorial area as the Armenians in eastern Anatolia. At the same time, the tribes wanted to gain economic advantages by killing Armenians," Akcam told Rudaw.

The main responsibility for the massacres is blamed on the Ottoman State and its three leaders, Enver, Talat and Cemal Pasha.

From the 1890s the Ottoman Empire had "organized the Kurds against the Armenians under the so-called Hamidiye Regiment, which massacred the Armenians," Akcam explained.

Others were instigated to murder by religious propaganda.

"Many uneducated Kurds were told that if they kill some infidels then they will go to heaven," Ungor said.

Some Armenians escaped the genocide by converting to Islam or by hiding, sometimes growing up in a Kurdish family. One example is Karapete Xaco, an Armenian musician born to genocide survivors. He later moved to Yerevan, the Armenian capital, and worked for Yerevan Radio, recording hundreds of songs in Kurdish and playing a major role in developing Kurdish music.

Last year Ahmed Turk, a Kurdish politician in Turkey, declared that the Kurds have their share of "guilt in the genocide, too," and apologized to the Armenians.

"Our fathers and grandfathers were used against Assyrians and Yezidis, as well as against Armenians. They persecuted these people; their hands are stained with blood. We as the descendants apologize," Turk said.

Although most genocide scholars have acknowledged the Armenian massacres as one of the first modern, systematic genocides, not everyone is convinced of that. In Turkey, referring to the 1915 killings as genocide risks legal action by the state.

According to Daniella Kuzmanovic, lecturer at Copenhagen University and an expert on Turkey, many Turks fear that by admitting to genocide the state risks claims of financial compensation from the descendants of victims, or losing territory in eastern Anatolia.

But the opposition to the recognition goes much deeper: There is no mention of the Armenian genocide in Turkish schoolbooks.

"The vast majority of Turks hardly know what you are talking about when you mention the Armenian genocide, because it is not a story they were told," Kuzmanovic told Rudaw.

The denial is also about preserving Turkish national pride and self-esteem. "To be associated with genocide means a violation of the national pride and honor," Kuzmanovic says.

Ungor agrees.

"If you lie to a country of 80 million people for 90 years, how difficult is it now to say, 'by the way, all we told you was a lie?'"

