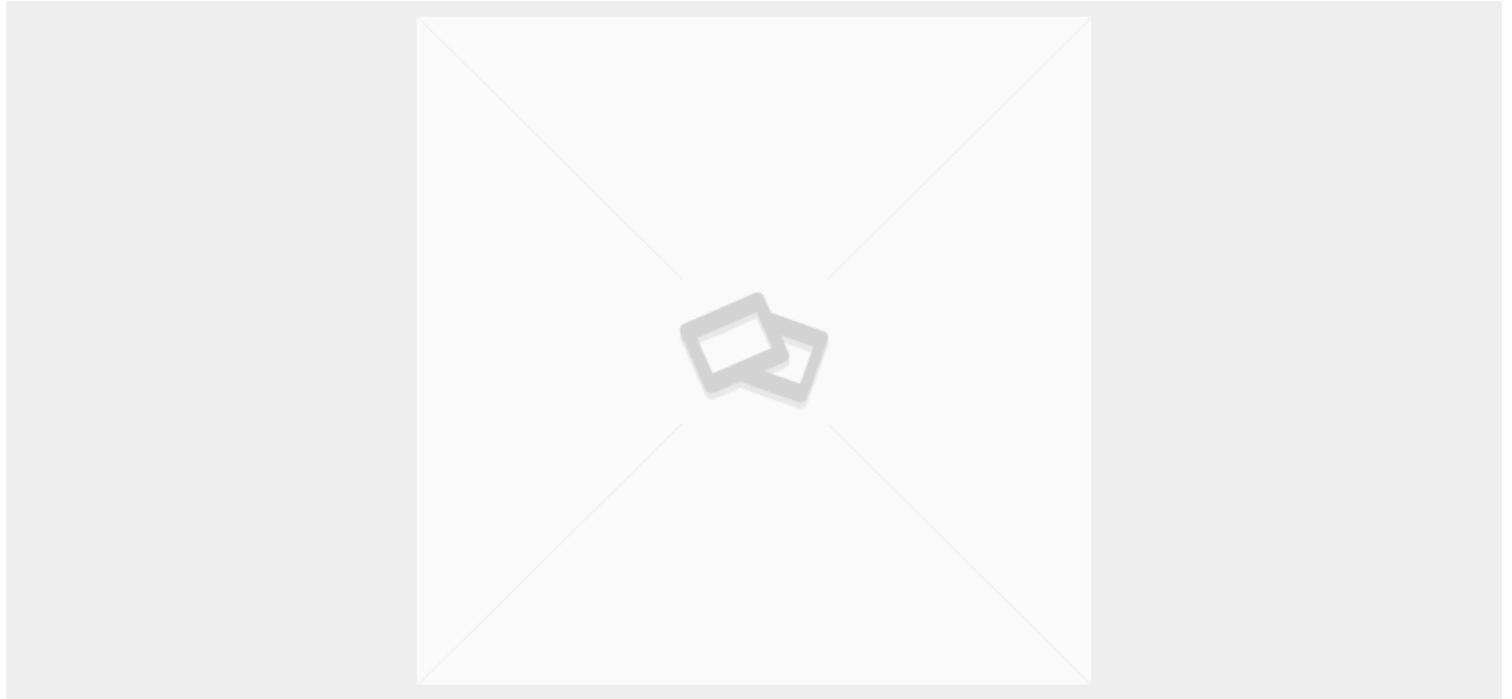


WHAT'S NEXT?

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By Dikran Abrahamian BA, MD Monday, September 3, 2007

A close friend asked, "If there is one item that would be the most important for the Armenian community in Canada, what would that be?" I was glad to see that my unspoken answer was what he elaborated on in his email message.

It was only three years ago that recognition of the Genocide was the number one issue. Back in 2004 when the Parliament was in session to recognize the Genocide the prime minister was conveniently "absent". It was left to his confidantes to "convince" the MPs against the motion. Gone are those days, and gone are the qualifiers such as "alleged" that abounded the national press whenever articles about the Genocide of the Armenians were written. The credit goes to the Right Honourable Stephen Harper for taking a principled stand and making it clear that Canada stands firmly on the side of a historical fact. Nowadays it is not uncommon to see several articles in the press, even in one single day, calling the tragedy in its proper legal designation.

Untold hours and years of work by members of ANCC, AWA, CCA, CAN, the Diocese, and the Prelacy played a major role in making the case. Various NGOs and charitable organisations were tirelessly involved in educating the Canadian public. The Genocide Scholarship internationally produced superb studies, and it laid the groundwork for establishing the veracity of the horrible tragedy. Without such monumental task the desired outcome could not have been achieved. Zoryan Institute carried a heavy weight. Other establishments, such as The Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies, were part of the process. The "killing fields" in Cambodia, Genocide in Rwanda and Major-General Romeo Dallaire's outspoken stance, racial cleansing in Europe, the unfolding of the massacres in Darfur, all helped drive home the inconsistency of talking about current tragedies and neglecting the prototype of all subsequent genocides of recent history. Genocide became a household term that people could connect with.

What's next? It would not be a mistake to state that people of all stripes would like to see the presence of Embassy of Canada in Armenia. It's not a secret wish, and it is within reach. What makes one uneasy however is the almost non-transparent nature of our organisations, and therefore one can't be sure whether it is being appropriately followed.

In March a reception was held by CCA honouring Stéphane Dion. It was reported that he was in favour of opening a Canadian Embassy in Armenia. To my knowledge this was the first time that a Canadian leader publicly lent his unequivocal support to a cherished cause. Why did it not receive adequate coverage? Couldn't Horizon, Baykar and others make contact and have interviews with the Honourable member of the official opposition? Did people write to him and thank him? Will our organisations tell at least their members what's afoot? What's wrong with sharing such news with the public? An embassy is not going to suddenly appear. Without vigorously pursuing the matter at all levels, it might end up in the realm of footnotes.

An initiative in writing directly to Mr. Dion can make a difference. Simultaneously the PMO and members of the parliament of all parties should be aware of our wish. Individual messages underscore the communitywide support to such a motion. Contact information can be obtained from the House of Commons by [clicking here](#).

Make your voice heard.

