

Alliance for Genocide Awareness and Remembrance
Alliance pour la Sensibilisation et la Commémoration des Génocides
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Historical Armenian Genocide Memorial destroyed by ISIS

Montreal, October 2, 2014 – The Alliance for Genocide Awareness and Remembrance (AGAR) vigorously condemns the destruction of a historical memorial church commemorating the Armenian Genocide in Der Zor, by the terrorist forces of the Islamic State for Iraq and Syria (ISIS).

The Der Zor Armenian Genocide Memorial Church, located in present-day Syria, was built at the site where there were the remains of countless Armenian Genocide victims who arrived in the area as the last stop of the mass deportation of Armenians, orchestrated by Ottoman Turkey in 1915. Armenians who survived the deportation and reached Der Zor were executed by the Turks. Several years later, an Armenian Genocide Memorial Church was erected on the site, to serve as a reminder to future generations of this black page of Ottoman Turkish history. We are concerned that the destruction of this site of great significance, which serves as a beacon to prevent crimes against humanity and genocide received little media coverage and is not known by the general public.

'This horrendous act aimed at the Armenian people, many of whom have the remains of their ancestors buried under the memorial, is something that we vigorously condemn,' said Mr. Mheir Karakachian, representing the board of AGAR. *'This site is the Armenian equivalent to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial, where many Jews died during the Shoah,'* Mr Karakachian continued.

Despite the international recognition of the mass deportations of Armenians from 1915-1923 that led to the death of 1.5 million Armenians as genocide, today's Turkey still denies this historical fact.

AGAR additionally calls on The Right Honorable Prime Minister Stephen Harper to denounce this act of genocide denial and this shocking disregard for the victims of the Armenian genocide and their descendants. Such memorials must serve as places of commemoration and education for all citizens of the world.

AGAR is composed of communities marked by the scars of genocide and crimes against humanity. The objectives include working together, survivor communities and their descendants to raise awareness about genocide, to foster education, and to effectively and vigorously combat denial. The Alliance members are: **The Armenian Genocide Centennial Committee of Canada; The Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre; PAGE-Rwanda; Centre Khemara; Ukrainian Information & Anti-Defamation Committee.**

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